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LETTERS FROM ITALY

TO

A YOUNGER SISTER.

BY

CATHARINE TAYLOR.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

“ Da barbarica man percossa e vinta,
Cadde in sè stessa, e fra ruine e morti
In sè medesima poi sepolta giacque.
.....Indì risorse
Più bella agli occhi della mente interna,
E maggior di sè stessa, anzi del mondo.”

Tasso.

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PREFACE.

ITALY has been the theme of so many able and distinguished writers—its history, literature, antiquities, and treasures of art, all that the truth or romance of past and present times can supply, have been so often presented to the public, both in poetry and prose, that the present work may seem an unnecessary, if not a presumptuous undertaking, and many will ask, “Can anything new be said of Italy?” I at once confess that in writing, my object has not been novelty, but utility; for amongst the various works on Italy that have fallen in my way, I have not found one which brings this country, with all its interesting associations, within the reach of young people.

During a delightful residence of seventeen months on the Continent, I kept a full and faithful Journal; thus hoping to make the members of my family at home sharers in my pleasures. On my return, in pursuing the education of my younger sister, I found that the stores of knowledge and amusement which Italy had unfolded were of inestimable value. It was suggested to me that what I wrote for her instruction and gratification, might interest others of her age, and I was thus induced to think of giving this volume to the press.

As it has been my chief wish to awaken an interest in subjects of importance—to stimulate, rather than to satisfy the young mind—I have endeavoured to give such brief historical sketches as might lead to a further and deeper study of the events in which Italy has acted so great a part; in literature, to advert to the treasures which the Italian language contains—and in art, to furnish such information as might assist in the formation of a pure and correct taste. To this end I have gladly illustrated my own opinions and impressions by those of writers to whom Italy has been

a perpetual and fertile subject of thought and research, endeavouring at the same time to avoid quoting from such authors as are in the hands of every reader.

In speaking of religion, it has been my earnest desire, whilst lamenting and deprecating the errors and superstitions, as I regard them, of the Catholic Church, to inspire a charitable feeling towards its sincere and conscientious supporters. While Protestants reject human claims to infallibility, they should yield to others the right which they assert for themselves; and in censuring what to them appears error, no bitterness should be felt or expressed towards those who have sought and, as they think, found religious truth in the Church of Rome. "Actions, not opinions," it was truly said, "are the subjects of human control."

In these days travelling has become so general, that parents take their families to Italy as one step in their education; and I am willing to believe, that to such my little book may not be without its use: while to those who remain at home, I can only hope it may afford entertainment as well as instruction.

I cannot close this Preface without acknowledging the kind encouragement of many friends, which has enabled me to pursue my present delightful task to its completion; particularly that of the friends and companions of my journey, whose affectionate sympathy invited me to prosecute the work, which would otherwise have been abandoned.

In committing this volume again to the press, I may be allowed to indulge a hope that the object which first prompted its publication has been in some degree attained. In this edition I have corrected such errors as I could detect, and have availed myself of some new sources of information; I am especially indebted to Kugler's excellent Handbook of Painting, the English translation of which has been printed since this volume first appeared. To my young readers I offer my little book, repeating my earnest wish that it may serve to profit as well as to amuse their leisure hours.

C. T.

London, January, 1842.

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LETTERS FROM ITALY.



LETTER I.

Susa, November 1st.

I PROMISED when I left home to write to you frequently, and at length, of all I should see. Whilst enjoying the privilege of travelling through a country rendered delightful, not only by natural beauties of scenery, but enriched by treasures of art, and endeared to us by many historical associations, I am anxious to make you, as far as possible, a sharer in my enjoyment, and the more so as I think you are now at an age to derive both instruction and amusement from what I may tell you.

You are sufficiently acquainted with history to enter into the pleasure which cannot fail to arise from visiting the scenes in which many of its most important events have occurred. Italy on every account has large claims to our attentive examination and grateful remembrance. Whether we regard its history, its language, its literature, its works of painting, of architecture, or of sculpture,—all afford ample food for inquiry, and unfold sources of instruction, materials of knowledge, and associations replete with the highest interest. Rome, which for so many ages and in so many ways influenced the destiny of all Europe,—Venice, the seat of early commerce, whose singular and mysterious policy awakens a strange and fearful interest,—Genoa, its proud rival,—Florence, the birthplace of the Arts, and the stronghold of republican freedom,—have all been names familiar to us from childhood. You must follow my course on the map, and let your imagination accompany me through the scenes I may describe to you; thus we shall in some measure be fellow-travellers.

I wrote to you last from Geneva, which we quitted on Monday, October 27th. We had been detained some days for our passport, which it was necessary to send to Berne for the signature of the Austrian ambassador. As everything was prepared for the journey, trunks packed, and

books all put up, this time seemed long; and every day's delay made our journey across the Alps appear more formidable to us: the mountains around Geneva were already covered with snow; the Bise, the prevalent north-east wind there, blew strongly, and everything looked wintry. A dreadful storm, which had in some places destroyed the road across the Simplon and rendered it impassable, determined us to enter Italy by the pass of Mont Cenis. At length all was in readiness, and on Monday last we set out.

I know not why, but I had a secret fear of this journey across the Alps: the season is far advanced, and I had pictured to myself something terrific in these mountain passes—something of Siberian cold to suffer, and awful precipices to encounter. How different is reality from the pictures which imagination draws! the dreaded mountain is crossed with ease, and even enjoyment. We were five days in reaching the foot of Mont Cenis; our road the while lying through valleys, here narrowing into defiles, there opening into fine pasture lands, through which ran, tumbling and foaming over rocks, a mountain stream, the Arc; this we followed for miles, often crossing it by noble bridges of a single arch.

The road was in many parts carried along the edge of the mountains, hewn in their very sides.

You know, perhaps, that this road was one of Buonaparte's great undertakings ; it is truly magnificent. The difficulties to be encountered, in carrying it along the valleys, through the mazes of these mountains, and across their rocky and snow-covered heights, might have daunted a less vigorous mind. This pass and that of the Simplon, with some other roads in Italy, remain as monuments of his greatness.

At the little village of Lans-le-bourg we slept last night, in an inn, once a barrack, erected by Napoleon. We suffered much from cold in the valley, on which the sun shines at this season for a few hours only in the day ; appearing above the mountains at eleven o'clock, and sinking behind their snowy summits at about three in the afternoon.

And now you must imagine us wrapped in all our warmest apparel, every cloak and boa in requisition, slowly pursuing our way up the steep side of the mountain. On the approach to Lans-le-bourg, surrounded as it is on every side by inaccessible heights, you might imagine yourself at the world's end. There seems no outlet ; ranges on ranges of Alps cross and intersect each other, and the eye is bewildered in the vain attempt to follow them ; the highest are covered with snow, and glaciers descend from them into the valleys.

The road begins to rise immediately from this village, and is carried in terraces, supported on solid masonry, to the summit of the mountain, six thousand feet above the level of the sea. As we ascended, the valley looked beautiful, scattered with little hamlets and cottages: we long watched the spire of the village we had just left, as it seemed by the frequent winding of the road to change its position in the landscape. We soon entered the region of snow, which lay in masses, pure and white on the green slopes, glittering in the sun: the small mountain streams were frozen as they ran, the ice assuming beautiful and grotesque forms, or hanging from the projecting points of rock in pendants of the clearest crystal. All trace of human habitation was lost, except that here and there we saw a little *châlet* perched on some distant mountain-side, the bright green spot of pasture land on which it stood looking like an oasis in the desert of snow. How picturesque are these *châlets*, standing aloof from the world beneath, the link connecting mankind with these Alpine solitudes! During the winter months they are deserted, but early in the spring the herdsman collects his flocks of cattle and goats, and forsaking the valley ascends to his eyrie on the mountains; there he lives during the summer, watching his flocks, and from the produce of his dairy laying

by stores for the winter. The herdsman sings in Schiller's "William Tell,"—

"We hie to the mountain, we come back again
When the cuckoo calls, when the songs awaken,
When the earth clothes itself anew with flowers,
When the rivulets flow in the lovely May.

Ye pastures, farewell!
Ye sunny meads!
The flocks must depart,
The summer is gone."

Far from experiencing the severe cold we expected, we were glad to throw aside some of our superfluous shawls. As the road ascended higher and higher, the sun shone with more power, and thawed us into life again. In three hours we reached the summit, and here dismissing some of our team, which consisted of six mules and two horses, we began to descend the mountain with only three mules.

At the door of the little inn we were accosted in English by a man, who welcomed us to Mont Cenis: he had learned to speak our language in Corfu. Oh the pleasure of hearing a few words of one's native tongue, uttered even by a stranger, in such a place! how the tide of home feelings and thoughts rushed back on my heart, mingling with those so strange and new which the wild and beautiful scene excited!

In a deep hollow, around which arose the lofty peaks of Mont Cenis, lay a small lake, in the dark transparent waters of which were reflected the snowy summits glittering in the sun; before and beneath us were chains of deeply serrated mountains,—beyond, the plains of Italy. What a moment was this! Italy, the long-desired, the beautiful Italy, was now lying at our feet; we seemed to be standing on its threshold, and its treasures were opening to our view. My mind seemed scarcely able to comprehend all that was then presented to it, or to believe that its day-dream was become reality.

The descent is even more beautiful than the ascent, though differing in character. You feel that you are now entering a southern region: the bleak hills and valleys of the north are exchanged for a bright and sunny landscape, and all nature wears a different aspect. Susa, the town from which I write, lies at the foot of Mont Cenis.

Here we are sitting with open windows, and without a fire, on the first of November. It is All Saints' Day, the streets are alive with people dressed in their gayest attire, the houses are hung with flowers, and the churches strewn with ever-greens. All speaks of Italy and Catholicism.

Genoa, November 7th.

I **MUST** endeavour to give you some idea of this beautiful city, which we have just entered, and in which we intend to take up our abode for some days ; but first let me tell you something of the road by which we have reached it ; it offers indeed little of comparative interest, and my mind is so filled with what I have already seen of Genoa, that it is difficult to return to former impressions.

The journey from Susa to Turin occupied but a few hours. The road runs through the valley of the Dora Riparia, beneath the lofty Alps which form its northern barrier ; for a long time we observed in the distance the route which we had travelled yesterday, as it climbed the mountain in long circuitous windings.

Turin is undoubtedly a beautiful city ; its wide streets, arcades, spacious piazzas, and bridges, excite a stranger's admiration. Nevertheless I confess that I felt disappointed : all is so modern,—the streets running in long straight lines, intersecting one another at right angles, and often terminating in some large piazza. We in vain look for any of those traces of past ages, in buildings or monuments, which give so great a charm to the other cities of Italy ; for in the various

chances of war and reverses of fortune, to which Turin has been subjected, few of the remains of antiquity, or even of the Middle Ages, have escaped destruction. Whatever the city may have gained in symmetry and beauty, it has certainly lost much in interest. Nevertheless, as the first Italian city we entered, it had a novel charm, and as we drove down the long street of La Dora Grossa, I read with delight all the inscriptions over the doors, and listened eagerly for the sweet Italian sounds. French, however, is the common language heard in the streets, and the population seems chiefly composed of military men and priests. We went to the king's palace, in the hope of seeing some pictures, but we found that they had been removed to the Castello, a palace in which the king is now forming a gallery.

We saw the chapel of the San Sudario, where is preserved a handkerchief with which our Saviour is said to have wiped his brow whilst carrying his cross, and which is supposed to bear the impress of his face; it is held in veneration and worshiped by the people as a very precious relic, but is shown in public only once in twenty-five years. As to the genuineness of this relic I will leave you to form your own opinion, only observing that there are seven which claim with equal authority to be the true and veritable San Sudario: one of these

is kept at Rome, the others are at Milan, Cadoin in Perigord, Besançon, Compiègne, and Aix-la-Chapelle. That at Cadoin rests its claim on fourteen Bulls, issued by different Popes; that at Turin has only four to support it; what credentials the others can produce I know not.

The pictures, which we afterwards went to see, are very fine, but I will not weary you with descriptions, which could give you no idea of the effect they produce on the mind of the beholder, and would only fill my letters with uninteresting details. I saw in one apartment of the Palace a collection of paintings on china, beautifully executed by M. Constantin, a Genevese artist: they were principally copies from pictures in Rome and Florence.

From the Palace we walked down the noble street of the Po to the bridge which crosses that river. The view from this spot is very fine: hills, rather than mountains, rise on every side, covered with groves of chestnuts and other trees, from which peep forth villas and castles. The loftiest of these hills is crowned by the dome of the Superga, a church erected in 1731 by Victor Amadeus the Second, in fulfilment of a vow made by him, when on that spot he concerted with Eugene of Savoy the delivery of the city of Turin, which was at that time besieged by the French. The

Superga is, I am told, a beautiful structure of white marble, but we saw it only at a distance, where it formed a fine object in the landscape.

On Thursday we crossed the plains of Marengo, rendered famous by the victory which Buonaparte gained there, on his second invasion of Italy, after his Egyptian campaign. It was here that he lost one of his best generals, Dessaix*, who fell at the moment in which, at the head of two hundred men, he had charged the enemy.

In the third day's journey from Turin to Genoa the road passes over the Apennines. The character of these mountains in this part of Italy is more wild than beautiful: from the summit of one the view is very singular; hills rise around in barren ridges, and below the eye rests on fertile and richly cultivated plains, through which the road is seen winding for many miles; it lies beneath you, on the side of the hill, coiled like a great serpent. Down this we were rapidly whirled, and a few hours brought us to the shores of the Mediterranean; we had long watched for its waters, and we hailed them at length with an exclamation of delight. This was our first glimpse of the sea since we left our dear island-home.

How shall I tell you of the approach to Genoa?

* There is a monument to his memory in the chapel of the Convent of St. Bernard.

Soon after we had reached the sea we found by the increasing bustle that we were near a city ; at length we passed the lighthouse, which is of great height and stands on a projecting point of rock. All Genoa was now before us, the sea receding and forming a magnificent crescent. This is the Gulf of Genoa ; and on its shores rise in an amphitheatre, backed by hills, the terraces of palaces and houses, interspersed with gardens and orange-groves, surmounted by the towers of the churches. The beauty which then burst on our view is scarcely to be described. The sun, which had been hidden by clouds all the morning, now shone brightly on the blue waters of the Bay, which danced and glittered in his beams ; it seemed to welcome us to the land of the south.

One striking sign of the decay of this beautiful city meets the eye even before passing its gates. The palace of Andrea Doria stands at the entrance of the city, bearing an inscription, in which he is spoken of as the saviour of his country. But the proud republican would scarcely now be able to recognise in its falling walls and deserted chambers the palace which emperors once envied.

Passing through four gates, and following the road round the Bay, under high rocks of marble, we were soon within the dirty streets of the city, for dirty they proved to be when viewed in detail,

and very narrow. We are, however, comfortably settled on the shores of the bay in the Albergo di Londra, and I am never tired of looking out of the window, beneath which is a little kind of pier, called the Ponte di Legno. This is thronged with busy crowds; near it are moored feluccas and small vessels, and there is a continual lading and unlading of mules, whilst people of all classes pass and repass,—now a mendicant friar with his coarse gown and cowl, or fishermen in their striped woollen jackets and red caps hanging down to their shoulders, or twisted round their heads, turban-fashion: then women with their long white veils, which, fastened on the forehead and covering the head and shoulders, fall down to the feet in pretty and graceful folds.

It is late, and I must close my letter. We must now endeavour to learn the Italian way of reckoning time: the day here begins when the sun sets, and the hours run on through the whole twenty-four. “*Sono le venti due, Signorina,*” (It is twenty-two o’clock, Madam,) was the reply, when I asked what time it was soon after our arrival. Farewell!

LETTER II.

Genoa, November 8th.

THE weather is so unpromising, that I fear it will make us prisoners today ; the clouds are hanging in heavy masses over the Bay, and not a ray of sunshine comes to cheer us. This is no small annoyance, since our stay here must be short ; but it will become less so if I devote the morning to you. We cannot employ it better than in briefly reviewing the history of this beautiful but fallen city.

The Bay is now silent and deserted, whose bright waves brought from foreign conquest the triumphant gallies of the Republic, or floated the more peaceful vessels of its merchants. Genoa was one of the cities foremost in commercial enterprise : she had preserved her freedom from the assaults of the Lombards, when they overran the north of Italy, and possessed themselves of those fair and fertile plains to which they gave their name. In the end of the eleventh century, she, as well as Pisa, furnished vessels for the Cru-

sades, established large mercantile colonies in the East, and acquired for her citizens almost unbounded wealth. Genoa was even then worthy its appellation of *la Superba*. Palaces rose around its Bay, and luxury in every varied form found admittance within its walls. A long-subsisting and deep-rooted jealousy, which existed between the republics of Pisa and Genoa, broke forth into open war in 1282. Pisa was crushed by its more powerful opponent; eleven hundred of its citizens were made prisoners, and the power of Genoa was established.

Genoa found in Venice a more formidable rival: both these republics had sent out armaments to the Crusades, and had opened a commercial intercourse with the East; it was natural therefore that quarrels should arise between them, and they long contended for the empire of the Mediterranean and the monopoly of Eastern trade. In sixteen naval engagements the Genoese were victorious over their powerful opponents, and, conquerors of the Pisans and Venetians, they long maintained their maritime superiority.

Their form of government was democratic, and continued so until 1311, when, being molested by a combination of the Ligurian nobility, they placed their city under the control of Henry the Seventh, emperor of Germany. His despotic government

was as little relished by these sturdy republicans as the oppression of the nobles had been, and in less than a year Henry was obliged to abandon the city.

In 1353, having been defeated in an engagement with the Venetians in the Levant, they called in the aid of Giovanni Visconti, lord of Milan, again attacked their enemies, and vanquished them. After his death, the treaty which he had entered into with the Genoese was violated by his nephews, who succeeded him; the Milanese soldiers were expelled from Genoa, and the republic was once more free. The feuds between Genoa and Venice were renewed in 1372; the isle of Cyprus was wrested from the latter, and the Genoese under Pietro Doria laid siege to Chiozza, an island within twenty-five miles of Venice. This war lasted nine years, when, the resources of both republics being nearly exhausted, a treaty of peace was concluded between them.

Towards the close of that century the tranquillity of Genoa was again disturbed by the Guelphs and Ghibellines—factions of whom I shall tell you more hereafter—who, during this and the following centuries, shook all Italy with their deadly feuds: not a city escaped the evils which they engendered; the miseries of civil war spread throughout the land, and large and noble families as well

as states became the enemies of each other. In Genoa the consequences were most disastrous ; Galeazzo Sforza, the powerful and ambitious Duke of Milan, availing himself of its internal discord, seized the city, and it remained subject to the Milanese until 1478, when, assisted by the King of Naples, it threw off their yoke, and elected Prospero Adorno Doge of the Republic.

On the invasion of Italy by the French, under Charles the Eighth, Genoa yielded to their arms ; and when the emperor Charles the Fifth, in 1522, entered that country, invited by Pope Leo the Tenth to assist in driving out the French, Genoa was pillaged by his Spanish troops with almost unparalleled ferocity. The ruin thus brought upon this noble city gave a shock to the fortunes of almost all the merchants in Europe.

In the reverses of war Genoa again became subject to the French ; until her citizens, roused by the patriotism of Andrea Doria, loudly demanded a restitution of their liberty. Having collected a fleet, manned with the bravest spirits of Liguria, Andrea their admiral presented himself before Genoa, which rose to arms at his approach. The French were obliged to evacuate the city, and in 1528 the Republic was re-established. But Andrea Doria restored the appearance only of liberty to Genoa ; he formed the government into an aristo-

cracy, preserving to his own family the chief power, whilst his submissive conduct to the Emperor was looked upon by the Genoese as degrading and humiliating.

In 1684, Louis the Fourteenth, to resent some fancied insult, attacked Genoa, and would have destroyed the city, had not the Doge with a deputation of the chief senators hastened to Paris, to offer unlimited submission. One last and vigorous effort was made by the Genoese in 1746 to regain their former independence: the Austrians who had been received into the city, tyrannized over its citizens, exacting large sums of money and supplies of men to carry on their war in Provence. This once more awakened the proud spirit of the republicans; they rose and drove out the usurpers. Genoa remained free until the time of Buonaparte, who conquered it in 1805; it is now annexed to the dominions of the House of Savoy, the head of which, since the treaty of peace in 1814, has resumed the title of King of Sardinia.

Having spoken of the history of Genoa, I must not forget to recall to your mind that Christopher Columbus was a native of this state. While Florence boasts her Galileo, the discoverer of new worlds in the wide expanse of the heavens, Genoa may point with pride to her Columbus, who, amidst difficulties of every kind, traversed the

unexplored paths of the deep, and, revealing to mankind the existence of a new world within our own planet, opened a way for the civilization of millions of our fellow-creatures.

Genoa, November 12th.

WE have spent the last two mornings in wandering about the city, visiting palaces and churches, the former of which contain some good pictures, and are in themselves fine specimens of the residences of the Italian nobility. Genoa has justly been called the city of palaces; they meet you everywhere, their spacious courts inclosed by columns of marble, wreathed with vines or creeping plants, their wide balconies paved with mosaic and surrounded by balustrades of marble, on which stand ranged in elegant vases orange and lemon trees, with their clusters of golden fruit and sweet flowers, and the gardens rising in terraces on the hills, rich in luxuriant vegetation.

There are only three streets in Genoa through which a carriage can pass, the rest are narrow lanes, but we find much in them to interest us, in exploring their mazy labyrinths; by this means we see something of the habits and manners of the people. There are scarcely any traces of the nasal French accent which we had fancied we found at Turin, and the sweet liquid sounds of the Italian

language greet the ear at every turn. The appearance of the people disappoints me ; this arises perhaps from the praises we constantly hear lavished on Italian beauty ; we look for finely chiselled features and brilliant eyes in every face, and often look in vain. But every now and then bright glances flash from beneath the long veil of a passing woman, or the beauty of some ragged urchin startles us, as he lifts his glowing face from his game of Morra to stare at the *forestieri*. This is a game played by two people ; each puts out one hand, extending as many of the fingers as he pleases, crying out some number under ten ; if the number of fingers on both hands amount to that which either party has named, he who has called it marks one, by putting up a finger of the other hand ; the game is gained when five or ten, as has been agreed upon, are thus scored. It is played with great rapidity, and we hear "*Cinque!*" "*Otto!*" "*Tre!*" vociferated often by loud and eager voices ; the people seem absorbed in the game, and spend half the day in playing it.*

The sights and sounds of this strange land differ so much from anything we have ever met with, that every moment offers something to attract us. Here a girl is busied roasting chestnuts, which

* This game was played by the ancient Romans, and was called "*Micare digitis.*"

she cries incessantly in no very melodious tone ; there, another with a kind of frying-pan before her, a yard in diameter, is selling a sort of pancake, cut into pieces. Now a group of strange, uncouth figures, engaged in some game of hazard, gesticulating violently, arrests our notice, or a lazy beggar perhaps, stretched half asleep on the steps of a palace.

One of the most striking objects in Genoa is the Ponte di Carignano, which unites the two hills of Sarzaro and Carignano. It is supported on arches of immense height, which tower above the houses, and the men passing in the street below look like pigmies. From this bridge, which is a favourite promenade of the Genoese, the eye wanders over one of the most exquisite views imaginable : the town surrounds you, with its beautiful palaces and hanging gardens ; the church of Carignano, in itself a fine object, stands at the end of the bridge ; whilst beyond rise the hills, inclosing the city. On the other side of this glorious picture is the sea, of the deep blue of whose waters you can form no idea, nor of the pure and heavenly azure of the sky overhead ; whilst, giving life and animation to the scene, vessels and boats of various descriptions with their lateen sails are seen riding on the waves like sea-birds.

Our stay in Genoa is too short to permit us to

visit the charitable institutions, for which this city has long been celebrated ; amongst them let me mention the Albergo dei Poveri, or Refuge for the Poor, which stands on one of the hills above the town. This noble building was founded in 1655, and of the size of the establishment and the admirable manner in which it is conducted travellers speak in terms of unmeasured praise. The poor of all ages and conditions are sheltered within its walls, and it is capable of containing two thousand inmates. There is also a fine institution for the deaf and dumb.

This evening we attended vespers in the church of San Siro, and my mind is still deeply impressed by the scene. The church is a fine one ; a broad aisle leads up to the high altar, with two smaller ones supported by marble pillars. It was twilight when we entered, and priests were chanting the evening service in a small side chapel, brilliantly illuminated with wax tapers ; the rest of the church remained in comparative darkness. The aisles were filled with kneeling figures, chiefly women : and as the priest uttered his benediction, a loud "Amen !" burst from the prostrate crowd. A solemn silence followed,—a silence of secret and parting prayer : the partial light just bringing out those shadowy forms, wrapped in their long white veils, and bending in humble adora-

tion, the beauty of the building so dimly seen, and the pealing notes of the organ as they sounded through its lofty arches, all conspired to produce a strange effect on me, and I felt how much power such a religion must have over an ardent and imaginative mind, untaught to seek truth for itself, and prize it as man's highest good.

And now farewell! As I write, the waves are shining like liquid silver in the moonbeams; I have seldom seen a more glorious night. Oh that you were here, to see and feel all that this moment brings to me of pleasure! But the evening gun has long since sent its echoing sound along the sweeping shores of the Bay, and I must lay down my pen, to prepare for our departure tomorrow.

LETTER III.

Pisa, November 18th.

I BELIEVE it will be quite impossible to give you any idea of the road which we travelled for the first two days after we left Genoa; it is carried along the coast of the Mediterranean, winding with its beautiful shores, as they recede into bays and little coves, or stretching out into bold headlands: sometimes it crosses the lofty Apennines, at others runs along the level and sandy beach, washed by the bright waves of "the tideless sea."

Heavy rain had fallen for two or three days previous to our setting out, indeed we had been detained by it. In some parts, the road between Genoa and Pisa becomes dangerous after these mountain storms; and, little inclined to risk being shut up in an Italian village inn, we preferred remaining in our excellent hotel until all danger of such a disaster was past. We did set out however: the sun rose without a cloud, and the air was balmy and delicious,—happily for us, as our

road led over one of the highest passes of the Apennines.

The approach to Genoa on this side is far less imposing than that by which we entered it; the road winds down to the sea-shore, and the beautiful headland which forms one horn of the Bay rose before us as we left the city. At Recco the road begins to ascend the Apennines by long galleries or terraces: on the highest part is a tunnel of considerable length, cut through marble rocks; the view before entering it was magnificent.

We were now above the headland we had so often admired, and looked down upon the sea spread all around, the shores fringed with villas and gardens. Genoa lay beneath us; its domes and palaces glittering in the sun; on our left rose the Apennines, in chains of singularly formed hills, covered even to their summits with plantations of olive. As we passed through the tunnel, I put my head out of the carriage-window, to catch a last glimpse of this beautiful view: at the far end, looking like a picture set in a frame of rock, was Genoa, and the mountains rising in a background to the city: in a moment it was gone, and the scene quickly changed for another, more curious though less beautiful. We were now in the region of mountains, and passing over barren ridges of hills inclosing fertile valleys, soon

came in sight of the sea, which for a time we had lost. Descending the mountains at Rapallo we reached Chiavari to dinner.

The difference in vegetation begins here to be seen : we have come to the land of orange-groves and myrtle-hedges ; aloes spring from the rocks, and beautiful wild-flowers line the road on either side. The second night we reached La Spezzia, climbing by a long and skilfully planned road the summit of the Bracco. Never had I looked on a scene so wild and singular ; it was a very wilderness of mountains,—one chain rising behind the other in endless succession, tinged in the foreground with the richest purple hue, till, becoming fainter and fainter in the far distance, they faded to the softest silver grey. Scarcely a sign of human habitation was visible ; here and there we saw a mendicant friar or miserable beggar, or perhaps a long line of mules toiling slowly, one by one, under their heavy burdens, accompanied by hardy guides in picturesque cloaks and bright red caps. This solitude, so rarely broken, was almost awful, as for miles we traversed these mountain wilds.

Before reaching La Spezzia, we crossed a desolate valley, devastated by mountain torrents, the beds of which were now nearly dry. This town stands in a wide and well-cultivated plain, amidst

olive-trees, the dingy green of whose foliage contrasts finely with the garlands of vines which wreath their stems and hang in graceful festoons from tree to tree. The vines are now rich in autumnal tints,—from pale green to the deepest scarlet, violet, and brightest gold ; I have rarely seen anything more beautiful. We must not however linger on the road, or I shall be able to tell you little of Pisa. On our journey thither we passed through Carrara, famous for its quarries of pure white marble, which rivals the Parian of old.

Though Pisa wears now but a deserted appearance, it contains objects of no small interest. The Cathedral (or, as I have now learned to call it, the *Duomo*), the Baptistery, the Campanile or Leaning Tower, and the Campo Santo, are beautiful specimens of the architecture of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. They stand in a fine open piazza, or square, and present a view perhaps unequalled.

The Campanile, which first attracted our attention, consists of eight stories ; the highest one appears to have been added at a later period than the others, and is supposed, from its inclining in a direction opposite to that of the tower, to have been designed to balance it. It was during his residence in Pisa, that Galileo made many curious experiments from this tower on the fall of bodies

to the earth ; and it is an interesting coincidence, that Sir Isaac Newton, who subsequently discovered or determined the law of gravitation, was born the very year in which Galileo died*. It was also in the Cathedral of this city that the latter philosopher first conceived the idea of measuring time by the stroke of the pendulum, whilst watching the vibration of a lamp suspended from the ceiling. These facts, simple in themselves but so important in their results, lend a charm to this spot ; it is something to stand upon the same pavement which Galileo once trod.

The Cathedral is built of black and white marble, which gives it rather a magpie appearance, and destroys its unity and beauty. The interior however is richly ornamented ; lapis-lazuli, verde-antique, agate, and rare marbles cover the high altar, on which stands a fine bronze crucifix, the work of Giovanni di Bologna†. The effect is rich and beautiful ; everything pleased us, until we turned our eyes to the ceiling ; there we saw a gigantic figure of our Saviour, in mosaic of

* Another remarkable fact is, that Galileo was born on the same day that Michael Angelo died.

† Giovanni di Bologna was a Fleming by birth, but being educated in Italy, he became naturalized there, and his works in bronze and marble are found scattered through its cities. He was the most illustrious pupil of Michael Angelo.

blue and gold of the early ages : it was more like an Indian idol than a representative of anything human or divine.

In these early works, however, we must not look for anything of the beauty which in a later period developed *expression* in art : their interest is of a different kind ; these mosaics are relics of the early ages of Christianity, and, together with the rude paintings found in the Catacombs at Rome, are the last specimens of art previous to its temporary eclipse during the dark and turbulent period of the eighth and following centuries. The highest interest attached to them is their indication of a spirit of faith striving to find utterance in the unknown language of art. A writer* who has admirably treated of this subject, makes the following remark on these mosaics :—

“ At a period when mosaic was the prevailing, almost the exclusive, form of Christian painting, the majestic figure of Christ was usually placed over the altar, the right hand resting upon the book of life, with the inscription in large letters — ‘ *Ego sum via, veritas et vita*†.’ To strike the imagination of the faithful, on their entrance into the temple, by the image of the Saviour, whose mediation they came there to invoke, and to enforce this impression by three words, which admirably contained the whole mission of the Mediator,—such was the object of Christian art in its primitive grandeur and simplicity.”

* M. Rio : see his work ‘ *De la Poésie Chrétienne*. ’

† “ I am the way, the truth, and the life.”

To return to the Cathedral: the seats of the canons in the choir are worked in tarsia or wood-mosaic,—the designs most strange and misplaced; amongst them is a representation of the Campanile with only seven stories,—a proof that the eighth is, as is usually admitted, an addition. The Baptistry, standing apart from the Duomo, is a circular building, with a dome, supported inside on twelve pillars of granite, each of a different kind, and enriched with costly marbles. The font is surrounded by intagli* of the most exquisite workmanship, resembling fine lace-work executed in marble. The pulpit, one of Giovanni Pisano's best pieces of sculpture, is very beautiful. We were startled by the loud echo in the dome which the guide awoke by an unexpected shout.

And now to the Campo Santo. I scarcely knew what I was to see; and when a little green door opened, and admitted us into a beautiful cloister surrounding a burial-ground, my surprize and admiration were extreme. The arches are filled up with light and elegant tracery. The earth in the centre is said to have been brought by an archbishop of Pisa from Mount Calvary, in one of the many vessels which the Pisans equipped for

* *Intaglio* is a word derived from *intagliare*, to engrave or carve; it is employed generally for all sculpture in relief or incision. Italian writers employ the word for all species of engraving.

the Crusades ; for even in those remote times Pisa was a place of considerable importance, this small state having been amongst the first of the Italian republics which distinguished itself by commerce. The spot where the holy earth was deposited was called the Campo Santo, and around it, in the year 1283, Giovanni Pisano erected this cloistered square ; on its walls is preserved a valuable collection of frescos*, and specimens of antique sculpture, sarcophagi, vases and bassi-rilievi†: these we must regard with no small veneration, when we know that to the former may be traced much of the improved style of painting which was introduced in the thirteenth century.

Paintings of the age which immediately succeeded the revival of art in Italy exist here ; many are merely curious from their antiquity, but others possess much beauty and vigour of design. It is very interesting, in walking round this cloister, to trace the progress of art,—the stiff formalities of the eleventh century gradually yielding before the increasing love of the beautiful. A modern Italian

* Frescos derive their name from the word *fresco* (fresh), being painted on a freshly plastered wall ; the colours are laid on while the plaster is moist.

† Sculpture in *rilievo* is either *basso* or *alto* ; when the figures are raised but little from the surface they are said to be in *basso rilievo* ; when they stand out boldly, like life, in *alto rilievo*.

writer remarks, that the artists who have left their works in the Campo Santo may be said to have taken Painting from its birth and to have led it on to vigorous youth. Here Buffalmacco, in his rough and unpolished manner, proves how little removed he is from the masters of the Byzantine school; L'Orcagna, fanciful in invention, expresses in his 'Triumph of Death' the varying emotions of the human heart; whilst Giotto, in the two paintings that remain of all those which he executed here, shows in the noble expression of his countenances, the grace and nature of his attitudes, the breadth of his draperies, and above all in his majestic simplicity, with how much reason it has been said, that with him Painting sprang to a new birth. Cimabue has been called the Michael Angelo of his age, and Giotto, his pupil, may well be styled the Rafael.

The same author goes on to speak enthusiastically of Benozzo Gozzoli, who lived in the middle of the fifteenth century, commending the grace and elegance of his style, the ease of his outline, and the grandeur of his conception. The subject of the best-preserved fresco by this artist is the Tower of Babel; the figures are well grouped and extremely fine; many are portraits; there are five heads which are supposed to represent Cosmo de' Medici, his son Pietro, his grandson Lorenzo

the Magnificent, and Giuliano; the fifth is the celebrated Poliziano, the friend of Lorenzo and the companion of his literary pursuits.

Pisa was foremost in the career of improvement in art; Niccolo and Giovanni Pisano (a name which they derived from their birthplace) were the first, but more particularly the former, who studied from the Antique: these very sarcophagi and bassi-rilievi were their favourite models; and by imitating the graceful and easy forms and draperies of the ancients, they lost much of the stiff mannerism which had been introduced into Italy by the modern Greek artists*.

It is melancholy to walk through the deserted streets of this city; the coats-of-arms remaining over the gates of palaces, once the residence of noble Pisan families, now converted into store-houses or falling into decay, serve only to mark its former grandeur. Powerful and successful in commercial enterprise, it aroused the jealousy of

* Rosini says: "Il Campo Santo di Pisa in tal maniera non solo è il testimonio de' progressi dell' Architettura, nel suo rinascimento, anche innanzi il gran Brunellesco,—non solo presenta la storia, per dir così, della Pittura nei secoli decimo quarto e decimo quinto,—ma può riguardarsi come una Galleria di antichi bassi-rilievi, molti de' quali furono i modelli dietro a cui spiegar poterono le ali Niccolo, Giovanni e Andrea Pisani, precursori di Donatello, del Ghiberti, e di Michelangiolo."

Genoa, its proud rival and neighbour; the Pisans were defeated by the Genoese in a naval engagement, and never recovered their maritime power. Repeatedly attacked by the Florentines, they defended themselves with obstinate courage, amidst all the privations of sickness and famine. It was in one of these contests, in 1288, that Ugolino, count of Gheradesca, having been entrusted with the defence of the city, basely betrayed it into the hands of the Guelphs. He was taken, and, with his two sons and their children, thrown into a dungeon, the keys of which were given to his mortal enemy, Ruggiero degli Ubaldini, archbishop of Pisa, who after a few months threw them into the river, and allowed his victims to perish in the agonies of hunger. Dante has immortalized this event, by making it the subject of one of the finest episodes in the 'Inferno.' The picture presented in the following lines is one of the most powerful and fearfully descriptive in the whole range of poetry*.

“ Before the trace
Of dawn I woke, and heard my sons' lament,
(For they were with me) moaning in their sleep,
And craving bread. Right cruel is thy bent,

* I give the beautiful translation by Mr. Thomas Roscoe. Sir J. Reynolds has transferred Dante's picture to canvas.

If, hearing this, no horror o'er thee creep ;
If, guessing what I now began to dread,
Thou weep'st not, wherefore art thou wont to weep ?
Now were they all awake. The hour when bread
Was wont to be bestow'd, had now drawn near ;
And dismal doubts, in each, his dream had bred.
Then lock'd below, the portals did we hear
Of that most horrible Tower. I fix'd my eye
Without one word upon my children dear ;
Harden'd like rock within, I heaved no sigh :
They wept : and then I heard my Anselm say,
'Thou look'st so, sire ! what ails thee ?' No reply
I utter'd yet, nor wept I all that day,
Nor the succeeding night, till on the gloom
Another sun had issued. When his ray
Had scantily illumed our prison-room,
And in four haggard visages I saw
My own shrunk aspect, and our common doom,
Both hands for very anguish did I gnaw.
They, thinking that I tore them through desire
Of food, rose sudden from their dungeon-straw,
And spoke : ' Less grief it were, of us, O sire,
If thou wouldst eat : these limbs thou by our birth
Didst clothe ; despoil them now, if need require.'
Not to increase their pangs of grief and dearth,
I calm'd me. Two days more all mute we stood ;
Wherefore didst thou not open, pitiless Earth ?
Now as the fourth sad morning was renew'd,
Gaddo fell at my feet, outstretch'd and cold,
Crying, ' Wilt thou not, father, give me food ?'
There did he die ; and as thine eyes behold
Me now, so saw I three fall, one by one,
On the fifth day and sixth : whence in that hold
I, now grown blind, over each lifeless son,
Stretch'd forth mine arms. Three days I call'd their names,
Then Fast achieved what Grief had not yet done."

In 1406 the Pisans were overcome by the Florentines, and remained under their dominion for more than eighty years. With its liberty Pisa lost its prosperity; the wealthy and noble inhabitants, unable to endure its degradation, quitted in crowds their native city. It was restored to freedom for a short time during the invasion of Italy by Charles the Eighth of France, but fell once more into the hands of the Florentines in 1509. This fresh disaster again depopulated Pisa, and she has never since regained her station among the Italian cities, being still included in the dominions of the Grand Duke of Tuscany.

Pisa, November 19th.

WE are just returned from an excursion to Leghorn, which has occupied the whole morning. There is little to interest a stranger in this busy town; and I think we were scarcely rewarded for giving up a day to it. The streets are narrow and dirty, crowded with people of all nations,—Greeks, Turks, Armenians, Jews from Poland and Barbary, in the costume of their countries, in picturesque groups. The docks are filled with vessels from all parts of the world, and lying in the harbour was an English merchantman, preparing to sail for London; my heart warmed at the sight. On the quay we saw four fine statues in bronze,

by Giovanni di Bologna, representing slaves chained to a pedestal, on which is erected an equestrian statue of Ferdinand the First. There are 18,000 Jews in Leghorn, and the synagogue is the largest in Europe; we went to see it, but found little to interest us. After spending three or four hours in this town we returned to Pisa to dinner. These two cities are strikingly contrasted; the one deserted, with grass-grown streets and palaces in decay, yet from its glory, and from the beautiful monuments of art which it contains, exciting an interest, which Leghorn with its bustling streets and noisy multitudes fails to inspire. I have filled my sheet, and must say farewell.

LETTER IV.

Florence, November 20th.

WE are arrived at Florence,—“ Firenze la bella!” Of the far-famed beauty of its situation we can say little now; the weather is cold and cheerless: we are glad to draw round the fire, and rejoice in carpets once more, a comfort rarely met with in Italian inns. The country through which we travelled from Pisa must be beautiful in summer; like all Tuscany, it is highly cultivated. Florence stands in a wide plain, watered by the Arno, and encompassed by the Apennines; the hills around the city are covered with olive plantations and woods of chestnut, amidst which are embosomed the villas of the Florentines.

One source of wealth in Tuscany arises from the manufacture of the celebrated Leghorn hats; at the door of every cottage we saw peasant-girls engaged in platting grass, bunches of which hung from the roof to bleach. The profits of this em-

ployment belong exclusively to the women of the family: the husband or father has however the right to exact a certain portion of rural labour from them; and as agricultural pursuits would render their hands too hard for the delicate straw-work, they hire country-girls from the Apennines, whom they pay from the money earned by the sale of their manufacture.

The annals of Florence present a series of internal commotions, of struggles between the great factions attached to the Papal and Imperial parties, known under the names of the Guelphs and Ghibellines. History will furnish you with the details; but a slight review of the events which attended the ascendancy of each party in turn will render what I have to tell of this beautiful city more intelligible.

During centuries of civil dissension and foreign warfare, Florence maintained its rank amongst the Italian republics; undaunted by the attempts of foreign princes to subjugate her, and triumphing over every internal assault on her freedom, she rose in power and increased in wealth; princes paid her homage, and drew immense loans from the treasures of her citizens. Perhaps none of the Italian republics possessed a more genuine love of liberty, or understood its value better than that of Florence; and it was under the semblance of

freedom alone that despotism effected her final ruin.

But let us examine the history of this republic more closely. Its early pages contain little more than accounts of the alternate failure and success of the Guelph and Ghibelline factions. These names, or rather the parties who adopted them, spread discord throughout Italy; feuds arose amidst the powerful families of almost all its cities, which lasted for centuries, and caused that civil warfare and division which prepared the way for the foreign despotism that eventually fell upon and crushed this beautiful land. The names Guelph and Ghibelline were of German origin, having been used as rallying words by the parties attached to the Dukes of Saxony and Bavaria, who were respectively adherents of the Popes and the Emperors of Franconia: they became soon after the war-cry of still more important factions in Italy. Aroused by the attempts of the emperor Frederic Barbarossa to encroach upon their liberties, the Lombard and Tuscan cities entered into a league, sanctioned by the Pope, to oppose the Imperial power; they assumed the name of Guelphs, while their opponents took that of Ghibellines.

Florence was, in the thirteenth century, the scene of a civil war which lasted upwards of thirty years; murders and assassinations kept the city

in a continual tumult. At length the Ghibellines possessed themselves of it, drove the Guelphs out, and declared for Frederic the Second, at that time emperor. The victorious party, become obnoxious to the proud citizens, assembled in the Piazza Santa Croce, and formed a new government, vesting the power in a magistracy chosen by the people, called the *Signoria*, and the Guelphs were recalled.

I shall not attempt to follow the various fortunes of these hostile parties, as by turns they gained and lost the ascendancy in Florence: let me rather tell you of the state of literature and art, both of which rose into a new existence in the thirteenth century. It was then that the Italian language was formed,—assuming, under the hand of Dante, a character and beauty which seem almost miraculous, when we consider what was its previous state. Other languages had already arisen from the barbarous dialects which had succeeded the invasion of the northern hordes. We find French manuscripts of the tenth century, but no Italian ones exist of earlier date than 1200. Is it not wonderful then that the *Divina Commedia*, Dante's great work, appeared at the latter end of that century? The infant language sprang forth in perfect beauty and proportion, and, modelled by the vigorous mind of its earliest great poet, at-

tained that place amongst modern languages which it will ever hold. It has undergone some changes ; many words adopted by Dante from the Latin, or from the dialect of the day, have become obsolete ; but the spirit remains the same,—a monument of the mighty genius of its creator, for such Dante Alighieri may well be called*.

His life, like that of many a kindred spirit, was a chequered one : born in 1265 of an illustrious Florentine family, the Alighieri, adherents of the Guelphs, in 1302 he was banished from his native city. Florence was not only harassed by the Guelphs and Ghibellines, but was kept in a continual state of warfare by the private animosities of some of the nobility. The Cancellieri family, divided amongst themselves, formed into rival parties under the names of Bianchi and Neri ; they were joined by many other families, amongst whom were the Donati and Cerchi, Dante Alighieri, and the father of Petrarca ; and it was in consequence of some disturbances between these

* Boccaccio thus eloquently speaks of Dante :—" Questi fu quel Dante, che a' nostri secoli fu concesso di speciale grazia da Iddio. Questi fu quel Dante, il qual prima dovea al ritorno delle Muse sbandite d' Italia, aprir la via. Per costui la chiarezza del Fiorentino idioma è dimostrato. Per costui ogni bellezza di volgar parlare, sotto debiti numeri è regolata. Per costui la morta Poesia, si può dir d' essere risuscitata."—*Vita di Dante*.

factions, in which Dante took part, that he was exiled. Irritated by this punishment, he became a Ghibelline, sought an asylum with the families attached to that cause, and carried with him from court to court a bitter sense of the injustice he had suffered, yet a deep love of his country which nothing could extinguish. No words can more beautifully describe his feelings as an exile, than those lines in which Cacciaguido foretells to Dante, when they meet in Paradise, the misfortunes which shall befall Florence and himself.

“Tu lascerai ogni cosa diletta
 Più caramente ; e questo e quello strale
 Che l' arco dell' esilio pria saetta.
 Tu proverai sì, come sa di sale
 Il pane altrui, e come è duro calle
 Il scendere e il salir per altrui scale*.”

Il Paradiso, Canto 17.

How pathetically does he bewail his fate in being “cast forth out of the sweet bosom of that fairest and most renowned daughter of Rome, Florence, in which I had my birth and nourish-

* “Thou shalt leave each thing
 Beloved most dearly : this is the first shaft
 Shot from the bow of exile. Thou shalt prove
 How salt the savour is of others' bread,—
 How hard the passage, to descend and climb
 By others' stairs.”

Cary's Translation.

ment, even to the ripeness of my age ; and in which, with her good will, I desire with all my heart to rest this wearied spirit of mine, and to terminate the time allotted to me on earth. Wandering over almost every part to which our language extends, I have gone about like a mendicant ; showing, against my will, the wound with which fortune has smitten me. I have indeed been a vessel without sail and without steerage, carried about to divers ports and roads and shores by the dry wind that springs out of sad poverty.” Yet when, through the intercession of a relative, he had obtained permission to return to his native city, on condition of publicly confessing his guilt in the cathedral, and imploring pardon of the Republic, he sent the following noble and eloquent refusal to submit to the terms proposed.

“ From your letter, which I received with due respect and affection, I observe how much you have at heart my restoration to my country. I am bound to you the more gratefully, since an exile rarely finds a friend. But after mature consideration, I must by my answer disappoint the wishes of some little minds ; and I confide in the judgement to which your impartiality and prudence will lead you. Your nephew and mine has written to me, what indeed had been mentioned by many other friends, that, by a decree concerning the exiles, I am allowed to return to Florence, provided I pay a certain sum of money, and submit to the humiliation of asking and receiving absolution. Wherein I see two propositions that are ridiculous and impertinent. I speak of the impertinence

of those who mention such conditions to me; for in your letter, dictated by judgement and discretion, there is no such thing. Is such an invitation to return to his country glorious for Dante, after suffering in banishment almost fifteen years? Is it thus then they would recompense innocence which all the world knows, and the labour and fatigue of unremitting study?.....Far from the man who cries aloud for justice be this compromise for money with his persecutors! No, this is not the way that shall lead me back to my country. But I shall return with hasty steps, if you or any other can open me a way that shall not derogate from the fame and honour of Dante. But if by no such way Florence can be entered, then Florence I will never enter. What! shall I not everywhere enjoy the sight of the sun and stars? and may I not seek and contemplate in every corner of the earth, under the canopy of heaven, consoling and delightful truth, without first rendering myself inglorious, nay infamous, to the people and republic of Florence? Bread, I hope, will not fail me*."

At Verona he resided with the powerful family of La Scala; but his haughty spirit, embittered by injuries, alienated his best friends from him. He assembled a troop of armed followers, and a their head endeavoured to force his way into Florence; his attempt was however unsuccessful, and he died an exile at Ravenna in 1321.

In Dante Italy lost her greatest poet, and Florence too late became proud of the distinction which his name conferred on her. The *Divina*

* This letter is preserved in the Laurentian library at Florence. See Ugo Foscolo's *Essays on Petrarca*.

Commedia was everywhere received with enthusiasm ; professors were appointed to expound it, of whom, in Florence, Boccaccio was the first ; and almost every library in Italy possesses a manuscript copy of that age. You will one day read this great work, and will then feel what Italy owes to Dante ; born in times of comparative ignorance, he is with justice called the father of the language and poetry of Italy.

An interesting circumstance connected with the history of the *Divina Commedia* is mentioned by Boccaccio. Whilst Dante was engaged upon that glorious work, having already composed seven cantos of the ‘*Inferno*,’ the political disturbances arose which led to his banishment from his native city. It chanced, after several years, that a person, searching amongst some property that had belonged to Dante, which at the period of his flight had been hastily stowed away for security, discovered this manuscript portion of the poem. Ignorant of what it was, he read it with admiration, and showed it to a friend, who, perceiving in it the marks of deep meaning veiled in sublime and poetical language, pronounced it to be the work of Dante. He eagerly sought the exile in his place of refuge, and sent the manuscript to him, asking by whom it had been written. Dante acknowledged the poem to be his

own, and when entreated to continue it, he replied, "I had indeed thought, that in the ruin of my property this manuscript had perished with my other books ; and from this belief, as well as from the multitude of disasters which have sprung from my exile, I had abandoned the lofty idea I had conceived in this work ; but since fortune so unexpectedly restores it to me, and as it pleases you, I will endeavour to recall to memory my first design, and will continue it, as grace may be granted me*." He resumed the work, not without difficulty, and after much time and labour completed the original design of his poem.

But Dante was not the only celebrated man of his age, although undoubtedly the greatest ; the thirteenth century saw the birth of many of those arts which contribute to the pleasure and luxury of social life. Specimens exist of painting at this period in the pictures of Cimabue and Giotto ; architecture, under Arnolfo Lapo, assumed a character of massive grandeur, which may still be traced in many of the buildings of Florence. Of these I shall write to you again ; at present I am but filling up a leisure evening, refreshing myself with recollections which will add to our mutual enjoyment of all we have before us.

* Boccaccio, Vita di Dante.

Florence, November 21st.

WE must now follow the fortunes of the Florentines; but before we return to the scenes of contention and bloodshed which their history presents, let me mention one singular fact, which proves the high estimation in which this republic was held throughout the world even at this early period. There exists in the Palazzo Vecchio here a curious picture by Ligozzi, representing Pope Boniface the Eighth receiving the foreign embassies during the Jubilee* of A.D. 1300. Amongst the ambassadors then present were twelve Florentines, sent by different potentates; and the list of the states of which they were the ministers seems not less extraordinary than the fact itself,—France, England, Bohemia, Germany, the Republics of Pisa and Ragusa, the Lords of Verona and Camerino, the King of Naples and Sicily, the Grand Master

* The Jubilee or Holy Year was instituted by Boniface the Eighth, as a means of replenishing the Papal coffers, which had been drained by the extravagance of preceding pontiffs. Under promise of plenary indulgence to all who should, at the opening of the century, visit the tombs of St. Peter and St. Paul, crowds of pilgrims were attracted to Rome, who bore rich and costly gifts to present at the holy shrines. So successful had this plan proved, that Clement the Sixth, unwilling to delay a repetition of the blessing until a century had elapsed, appointed a Jubilee to be held at the end of fifty years; this was called the Mosaic Jubilee.

of St. John of Jerusalem, and the Grand Khan of Tartary ! Boniface, who was astonished at this assemblage of Florentines, “gouvernant l’univers,” said “qu’ils étaient un cinquième élément.”

In 1310 Henry the Seventh became Emperor of Germany ; although his immediate predecessors had taken but little part in the affairs of Italy, yet on entering that country Henry found the hatred subsisting between the Guelphs and Ghibellines in all its former bitterness. He endeavoured to act impartially between them, but so virulent were their animosities, that all his prudence and forbearance were inadequate to the task. Florence, at that time the stronghold of the Guelphs, distrusted him, and, by taking up arms to resist his progress, roused that faction against him. Henry, after being crowned at Rome, died at Buon Convento, it is supposed by poison.

The Guelphs during the fourteenth century may be considered as the champions of liberty, the Ghibellines having lost much of the high spirit of patriotism which distinguished them in the beginning of the struggle*. Powerful and ambitious

* The Florentine historian Villani, who was a contemporary of Dante and a Guelph, sums up the matter briefly :—“Truly,” says he, “the Guelph party is the foundation, the true and firm and stedfast rock of the liberty of Italy, and the foe of all tyrannies : so that if any Guelph becomes a tyrant, he necessarily becomes a Ghibelline, and proofs of this are often seen.”

families allied themselves with this faction ; and the democracy, in which alone the pure and devoted love of country still existed, were adherents of the Guelphs. The Republics had all, with the exception of Pisa, declared in favour of the latter.

Florence was again foremost in resisting John of Bohemia, the son and successor of Henry the Seventh. He was an accomplished and generous prince, and many of the cities of Italy gladly opened their gates at his approach. The Florentines, however, undazzled by his noble qualities, saw in him only an usurper of their country's rights ; and, although unable to prevent the voluntary surrender which other cities made to him of their liberty, they endeavoured to stem the tide of his success. But, surrounded by enemies, they deemed themselves unable to the task of self-defence, and, unwisely calling in foreign assistance to their aid, they appointed Gualtiere di Brienne, duke of Athens, as the commander of their military forces. He was proud, ambitious, and cruel, and sought to aggrandize himself by every species of oppression. Florence, after submitting for ten months to his tyranny, rose in 1343, and expelled him from her walls.

Italy stood at this time in the vanguard of civilization ; Europe lay plunged in that ignorance which threatened to bury in its darkness all trace

of literature and science ; or if some symptom of returning light was dawning, it was in Italy that its brightest beams broke forth. Of Dante I have already spoken ; under his genius the language of Italy had assumed an individuality and beauty unknown before. Amongst the arts, architecture was the first to claim attention from its utility, and the beautiful was soon engrafted on the useful. Bridges, churches, palaces, still remain to us, proofs of the advance which architecture had made in this period. The study of the ancients was now beginning to gain ground ; Latin and Greek manuscripts were already sought for with an avidity scarcely credible. To Boccaccio we are indebted for the restoration of the works of Homer ; but the fame of this great prose writer chiefly rests on the *Decamerone*, which consists of a number of tales, supposed to be related by a party of Florentine ladies and cavaliers, assembled during the plague which raged in Florence at a country-house within a few miles of the city. All communication with the infected was cut off, and they spent their time in every species of diversion, amongst others that of relating stories. I cannot speak of this great work from a perusal of it ; but I believe it is remarkable for the purity and elegance of its diction, though not for its morality. Chaucer took the subject of several of his tales

from Boccaccio—amongst others, the story of ‘the patient Griseldis.’

The brightest æra in Florentine history is undeniably that in which the family of the Medici arose ; and the great encouragement and stimulus they gave to literature and the arts induce me to speak of them at some length.

The Republic of Florence had arrived, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, at its highest point of commercial prosperity ; the accumulation of wealth in certain families had tended to increase their power, and thus by degrees an aristocracy was formed. The danger with which the Republic was threatened was secret in its origin and progress ; nor was it until much of the love of liberty was undermined in the breasts of the Florentines, that despotism completed its overthrow. The Medici, by their princely liberality and patronage of men of eminence in literature and the fine arts, gained the hearts of their fellow-citizens. Their city was adorned with the works of Michael Angelo, their palaces enriched by paintings ; libraries sprang up, and a taste for all that was valuable and beautiful began to show itself. Without appearing to assume any unreasonable share in the government, the Medici tacitly and by degrees possessed themselves of the highest offices of the Republic, and exercised through a course of years

a powerful, and finally a fatal influence over the fate of its citizens. The benefits which Florence received from Cosmo and his grandson Lorenzo were real and tangible,—the evils which their policy produced were distant and unforeseen.

One cause which contributed greatly to the advancement of literature was the arrival of many learned Greeks, who took refuge in Italy when Constantinople was taken by the Turks in 1433. They were welcomed at the court of Cosmo de' Medici, whose delight it was to assemble around him men of talent and learning. Scholars were encouraged to travel in the East in search of manuscripts of the Greek classics; and Johannes Lascari, the learned Greek exile, who was sent on one of these expeditions by Lorenzo de' Medici, returned after his patron's death with two hundred manuscripts. From the collection thus formed arose the famous Medicean Library, since known under the name of the Biblioteca Laurentiana.

Another cause which favoured the revival of learning, was the establishment in all parts of Italy of public libraries and schools. The various little courts, as that of the Medici at Florence, those of the Dukes of Urbino and Ferrara, boasted their assemblage of scholars, poets, and artists. What a period must that have been, when Rafael and Bembo adorned the court of Urbino, and Po-

liziano and Michael Angelo immortalized that of the Medici!

I may remark in passing that at this period printing was invented, which perpetuated and diffused the knowledge that might otherwise have perished. The early printers, at the head of whom stands the name of Aldus, were among the most eminent men of letters of that age. They collected, edited, translated, and printed the Greek and Latin classics; and their editions remain to this day, not only the most beautiful specimens of their art, but monuments of their own deep erudition and unwearied labours.

Under the fostering care of Cosmo the arts made considerable advance; Brunelleschi and Orcagna in architecture, Donatello and Ghiberti in sculpture, and Masaccio in painting, all shared his friendship and patronage. The works of these artists will often come under our notice, and I wish you to be acquainted with their names. Even before his death, by a public decree, the title of "Pater Patriæ" (father of his country) was bestowed on Cosmo, and it was subsequently inscribed on his tomb. Pietro his son, who succeeded him, was weak in body and mind; but the family name, which for a time sank to insignificance, rose to more than its former lustre under Lorenzo the Magnificent, the grandson of Cosmo,

who inherited his vigour and energy of purpose, with even a greater refinement of taste and a more elegant mind. His talents were various, and he excelled in whatever he undertook: he distinguished himself as a statesman, successfully devoting his powers to the promotion and security of the peace of his native country, although courageous in moments of danger. Indefatigable in his endeavours to urge forward the progress of enlightenment, he encouraged all those arts and sciences which tend to humanize mankind; generous and urbane in his manners, he was beloved by the people, and attached to himself by the firmest bonds of gratitude a wide circle of intelligent friends. Lorenzo's court was the great school of literature and art at this period: he invited to Florence the most illustrious men of his time, and encouraged their studies with a liberality and zeal worthy of so great a prince. Amongst the most eminent of these scholars were Poliziano, Pico di Mirandola, Ficino, and Bembo, whose writings shed a lustre on Italian literature at the close of the fifteenth century. In the palace of Lorenzo, too, it must not be forgotten, Michael Angelo was received at an early age and educated. I cannot sketch the life of this great man; the events which marked his progress are too important to be discussed in a brief letter; all I desire is to excite

your curiosity,—Mr. Roscoe's interesting *Life of Lorenzo* will enable you to gratify it.

I must not pass over this period without mentioning a man who, by the daring energy of his character and powerful nature of his eloquence, acquired an ascendancy over the Florentines that has scarcely any parallel in history. Girolamo Savonarola has been stigmatised as a mere fanatic, and his life and actions afford abundant proofs of intemperate zeal, but in examining the motives of his conduct, we find a purity of intention, a devotion to the public good, that would cover a multitude of offences. Savonarola was by birth a Ferrarese, and at an early age entered a convent of Dominican friars. The eloquence of his discourses having attracted the notice of Lorenzo de' Medici, he was invited by him to Florence and appointed Prior of the convent of St. Mark. I have already told you how eagerly the literature of antiquity was pursued in Florence under the patronage of the Medici; Savonarola, in prosecuting his duties in that city as a preacher, was everywhere met by the spirit of Paganism: in the schools the study of the Greek philosophers engrossed the attention of the students; the pulpit was become the mere theatre of disquisitions on subtle points of scholastic learning, while the true faith, and the pure spirit of religion languished, and morals and man-

ners became more and more corrupted. To work a grand social reform, to check the growing licentiousness of the times, to preach the Word of God, to humble the proud and raise the poor, to infuse into art, science, and literature a new and holier spirit than Paganism offered, these were the aims which Savonarola set before him. His eloquent harangues drew such crowds to the church of St. Mark, that they were soon compelled to repair to the cathedral; people from all the neighbourhood flocked at early dawn to listen to this new prophet, for such he was regarded; and he was obliged to divide his audience, preaching separately to the men, women and children. He numbered amongst his admirers and friends many of the most celebrated men of his day; and the influence he exercised over art is seen in the works of Fra Bartolommeo and other artists. Inspired by the animated denunciations of Savonarola, they rejected all profane and licentious subjects; with minds deeply imbued with devout feeling, they breathed a spirit of faith into their works.

Yet whilst we rejoice to see the higher character thus imparted to Art by its alliance with Christianity, we cannot but lament that Savonarola, in his fanatical zeal, prescribed to his followers the destruction of all works in painting and sculpture, the subjects of which were selected from Pagan

mythology, or in which the attitudes or countenances portrayed merely earthly passions and affections. On the celebration of the Carnival in 1497, he commanded a bonfire to be kindled in the principal piazza in Florence, and by his eloquence so wrought on the feelings of the citizens, that they willingly brought and committed to the flames, not only the manuscripts of those writers, both ancient and modern, whose works he had denounced, but statues and paintings; thus perished many works of Fra Bartolommeo, and other artists of that period; and even statues of antiquity, the study and delight of the age, were thus sacrificed on the altar of purification. This scene of ruthless destruction was repeated three succeeding years, and while the flames rose around these precious treasures, the people, regarding the sacrifice as an act of sacred duty, shouted forth a loud "Te Deum!" The fame of Savonarola had now reached its highest point, and fate was preparing a fearful reverse for him. It was impossible but that the man who thus hurled his invectives against the rich and powerful should make many enemies, and by his rashness and the ill-advised means he frequently adopted he laid the foundation of his own ruin. After the fall of the Medici, Savonarola took an active share in the political tumults which ensued; placing himself at the

head of his powerful faction, he claimed to be immediately inspired by God; but the fanatical spirit which he kindled at length turned on himself. The virulent attacks he made on the Papal power aroused the indignation of many, and he was zealously opposed by Marino Ghinazzaro, a Franciscan friar. In the heat of argument one of the adherents of Savonarola challenged his opponent to submit to a fiery ordeal, offering himself to enter the flames if the Franciscan would do the same. The challenge was accepted; but on the appointed day Savonarola forbade his disciple to afford this proof of his miraculous power. By this means he lost his influence with the people, and fell an easy prey to those who were watching the moment of revenge. He was arrested, put to the torture, and finally burnt alive in 1498*.

The downfall of the Medici may be dated from the death of Lorenzo the Magnificent. Pietro his son was proclaimed chief of the Republic, but he was unequal from his weakness to meet the exigencies of the times. Italy had been invaded by Charles the Eighth of France, and was involved in all the horrors of war. Pietro, who in opposition to the wishes of the Florentines had engaged in hostilities with the French monarch, abandoned them in the hour of peril, and resigned many for-

*An interesting, but perhaps somewhat partial account of Savonarola is given in M. Rio's work, '*De la Poésie Chrétienne.*'

tresses into the hands of the enemy. This conduct roused the indignation of the citizens, and with his whole family he was banished from Florence. After an exile of eighteen years the Medici were restored, under the influence and protection of the Spaniards, who from their territories in Naples had marched to assist Pope Julius the Second against the French invasion. But their influence was gone, their immense wealth was dispersed, and, although whilst Leo the Tenth occupied the Papal throne some portion of the family dignity might seem to be restored, it was but the faint light which preceded its extinction. The various branches of his family were decaying around him, while Leo still continued to accumulate honours and wealth.

In the meanwhile the state of Florence became more and more disastrous. The republican form of government had been gradually undermined, and by Clement the Seventh (one of the Medici) it was at length placed under the entire and despotic control of Alexander, an illegitimate son of Lorenzo the Second. His reign was marked by every species of cruelty, and he died by assassination. He was succeeded by Cosmo the First, who was proclaimed Grand Duke of Tuscany by Pius the Fifth, which title was afterwards ratified by the Emperor of Germany, and under this form of government has Florence continued until the present day.

LETTER V.

Florence, November 22nd.

WE are just returned from our first walk through this beautiful city, and I must write to you at once, while all that I have seen is fresh upon my mind, for you know how every pleasure is doubled when I can share it with you. The cathedral is in general the first object to attract us in foreign towns, and that of Florence has great interest. It is a heavy but magnificent structure, and, with the Baptistery and Campanile adjoining, forms a fine group. It was begun in the year 1289 by Arnolfo Lapo, of whom I have already spoken as one of the earliest Florentine artists: his architecture is grand, simple, and imposing. Originally derived from the Etruscan architecture, the style of Arnolfo was softened by the pure and simple Tuscan introduced by Brunelleschi, and under Michael Angelo acquired a character of lightness and grace derived from the Grecian school. Lapo, who did not live to complete the Duomo, was succeeded in his labours by Giotto; but it was Brunelleschi who

brought the work to a close in 1426. He acquired such glory by this edifice, having been the first architect who succeeded in raising so vast a dome, that Michael Angelo, following in his steps, planned and executed the wondrous cupola of St. Peter's.

The effect of the Cathedral is, I think, greatly marred by the different-coloured marbles of which it is constructed: so majestic a building cannot be thus broken into mosaic-work without injury to its harmony, and the eye wanders over it restless and unsatisfied. The interior is singularly imposing: it has none of the finish or rich ornament of the Italian churches that I have yet seen; the walls are left rude and unpolished: the little light admitted comes from painted windows placed near the roof, and even at noonday the gloom is so profound, that on first entering, the eye in vain strives to penetrate to the far end of the long and spacious aisles.

There are few paintings, and those but imperfectly seen. The high altar stands within an octangular enclosure of white marble, immediately beneath the dome: from it rises a gigantic marble statue of the Deity, mourning over the body of Christ, which has just been taken down from the cross. Representations of Him who inhabits all space are always painful, but this was to me unusually revolting. It is the work of Bandinelli, a

Florentine, who seems to have made colossal size and giant proportions a substitute for the power which man can never attain of embodying his idea of the Creator. Behind the altar is an unfinished group by Michael Angelo, his last work, which is placed in such a dark corner that I was unable to form any opinion of it.

The Campanile, a lofty square tower, erected by Giotto, is light and graceful in its proportions: it is built of various-coloured marbles, which here however offend the eye less than in the Duomo. It was this tower which Charles the Fifth pronounced so beautiful as to deserve to be enclosed in a glass case. The doors of the Baptistery are of bronze, and the centre one, by Ghiberti, was declared by Michael Angelo worthy to be the portal of Paradise. Dante mentions this Baptistery in the 'Inferno' as

"...il mio bel San Giovanni *."

After some time passed in examining these buildings, we walked to the Piazza del Gran Duca. It is very irregular in its form, but contains many things which are curious and beautiful. At one corner stands a venerable building, the Palazzo Vecchio, projecting into the Piazza, and somewhat

* "St. John's fair dome of me beloved."—(*Cary.*)

destroying its symmetry. When Arnolfo Lapo was ordered by the Republic to erect a palace for the residence of the magistrates, and in which the public assemblies might be held, he drew the plan of a noble building which was to have occupied the centre of the Piazza: but this plan was rejected, in order that the tower which rises in the midst of it, and which is of great antiquity, might be included in the palace: this may account for the irregular form of the Piazza.

This palace is a standing record of the civil dissensions of Florence: every room has its story of horrors attached to it; every stone has been, to use the expressive words of an Italian writer, bathed in the blood of the citizens, now besieged, now defended by them, as in turn it was occupied by parties friendly or inimical to their liberty. In front are two statues, guarding as it were the entrance, —a colossal statue of David by Michael Angelo, and a Hercules, I believe by Donatello: the former was an early work of the great artist, when (subsequent to the death of Lorenzo,) he was induced by patriotic motives to leave Rome and return to Florence.

In one corner of the Piazza stands a beautiful arcade, which riveted my attention: it was erected by Orcagna in the early times of the Republic, as the place of meeting for the people when sum-

moned by the magistrates to take part in public affairs: under this arcade, or Loggia, decrees were read aloud, and the laws ratified by general consent. The architecture is simple and beautiful, more ornamented and less heavy than that of the age of Arnolfo Lapo: the colonnade consists of only three pillars, on which rests a rich projecting cornice; the arches of the roof are light and elegant. So beautiful did Michael Angelo think this Loggia, that he earnestly entreated Cosmo the First* to continue it round the Piazza. It now serves only for the reception of a few fine statues, amongst which is the Perseus by Benvenuto Cellini, a bronze figure of great beauty, graceful in form and perfect in its proportions; it is considered the best work of this artist †.

A fine group also stands here, of three figures in marble, by Giovanni di Bologna, usually called the Rape of the Sabines, but intended by the artist to represent the three ages of man—Youth, Man-

* It was not that Cosmo the First who was styled Pater Patriæ, but his descendant, who was created the first Grand Duke of Florence by Pope Pius the Fifth.

† Benvenuto Cellini lived in the time of M. Angelo, and was by trade a jeweller and goldsmith. The statue of Perseus is, I believe, the only large work he ever executed. His beautiful medals, seals, gems, vases, chalices, and mountings of precious stones are highly esteemed; one room in the Florence Gallery is nearly filled with them.

hood, and Old Age. This Piazza contains a fountain of immense size, loaded rather than ornamented with statues,—a colossal Neptune in the centre, in his car drawn by sea-horses, and surrounded by marine deities and monsters; near it is an equestrian statue of Cosmo the First, likewise executed by Giovanni di Bologna.

Before we returned to the Nuovo York, (how strangely New York sounds in Italian !) our present abode, we walked to the Arno, whose muddy waters little deserve the epithet of ‘silver’ so often bestowed upon them. The quays are very magnificent, and the bridge of the Santa Trinità is indeed a model of beauty: it consists of three arches, of exquisite form, combining in a remarkable degree lightness and elegance with strength and solidity of structure. The Arno, being a mountain stream, acquires great force during the spring rains, and had swept away many bridges before this one was erected, in 1509.

Tomorrow we spend in the Gallery: can it be that my expectations, raised as they are to the highest pitch, will be realized? This Gallery contains the collection of statues and paintings which belonged to the family of the Medici, with the additions made by their successors, amongst which are some unrivalled in beauty. I can pretend to little knowledge of the rules of art, and must be

content to look at the works which are presented to my notice with an unpractised eye; a fervent love of the beautiful must compensate for want of scientific knowledge. A passage quoted from Plato which I met with the other day pleased me: "In beholding daily," says he, "the master-pieces of painting, sculpture, and architecture, full of grace and purity in all their proportions, we learn to observe with accuracy what is lovely or defective in the works of nature or art, and this happy rectitude of judgement will become a second nature to our souls." I cannot describe the effect which painting and sculpture produce on my mind; it is strange and almost overpowering, and awakens thoughts and feelings which are as novel as they are delightful. He who walks through the world with no love of Art, or perception of its power and influence, may well be said to have one sense asleep, and to lose a source of pure and exalted pleasure. God has implanted in our nature the love of the beautiful, and as we meet with nearer and nearer approaches to its perfection, in character, in form, or in the various combinations in which beauty is presented to us, our hearts glow in proportion with delight, and our thoughts rise to Him who is the source of all that is true, and beautiful and good. Art appeals to the feeling of truth within us; through the feelings it speaks to the heart, and

awakens our noblest faculties. In saying this, I look at what its tendencies might be, more than what they actually are; in proportion as the pursuit of art is followed in a spirit of trade, for the wealth which it procures, rather than the mental delight which it so richly affords, its character must decline. There is however a pleasure in reflecting that although artists may vary at different periods in excellence with the shifting influences of society, *Art* remains unchanged, its powers immutable, its purposes pure and noble.

Let us briefly review the history of Art, as it rose after the dark ages. Florence was, if not its birth-place, at least its nursery. Although no paintings of the ancient Greek masters remain to us, we may form an opinion of their excellence from the mention made of their works by contemporary historians, who speak with equal delight of this branch of art as of sculpture. In the splendid statues of antiquity which still exist, we trace the great perfection to which sculpture had arrived; and we cannot believe that painting, its twin-born sister, was far behind. After the establishment of the Roman empire in Greece, the arts sensibly declined: pursued by the Romans merely as a source of luxury and lavish expense, painting and sculpture lost much of their vigour: statues were collected by the rich, and valued in proportion to the

difficulty of procuring them. Greece was stripped of her treasures, and Rome became enriched by them; but the high feeling for art which had led to its perfection in Greece was extinct.

We cannot wonder, that under the dominion of the northern barbarians the fine arts should have sunk into decay: the time which elapsed from the conquest of Greece until the eleventh century may be regarded as a blank in their history. It was then that Painting began to rise into life again, and Florence gave birth to the first artist of any eminence.

Cimabue lived about the middle of the thirteenth century: many of his pictures are still preserved; although quaint and formal, they are much in advance of the modern Greek school of painting, till this period the only one imitated by Italian artists. His colours are bright; the heads of his saints are surrounded by crowns of gold, deep fringes of which also ornament the dresses: these, with an extraordinary want of perspective, and figures with long sharp-pointed feet, and claws instead of hands, were remains of the school in which Cimabue had studied. His conceptions were comparatively grand and boldly executed, but there is in all his works a want of grace and beauty.

Cimabue was succeeded by his pupil Giotto, who was taken by him from a shepherd's life when quite

a boy, and soon surpassed his master. Like Niccolò Pisano he studied from antique statues, and took nature for his model: his forms became less stiff, and acquired a certain degree of grace; his faces are at times full of expression. The pictures of Giotto were the study of artists during the fourteenth century: I have already spoken of his 'Life of Job' in the Campo Santo at Pisa, and of Orcagna's 'Triumph of Death,' a picture of the same date.

Contemporary with Giotto was Simone di Martino, commonly called Memmi, a Sienese artist, the friend of Petrarca, who mentions him in his sonnets; few of his works remain, and I have not been fortunate enough to see any. His style is thus spoken of by a German writer on Art: "The conception in the whole of these works (frescos scattered through the churches of Siena) is far more solemn, deep and impressive than is usually found among the Florentines: repose, dignity, majesty, in one word, holiness speaks in every form and movement *."

I have told you of the influence exercised by Savonarola upon Art: previous to his time however there were bright examples of that spirit of piety, which he sought to awaken in the minds of artists.

• Kugler.

Amongst these none shines with a more mild and heavenly lustre than Fra Beato Giovanni da Fiesole, a Dominican friar, who was born in 1387. Kugler gives the following beautiful account of this artist, which I am tempted to extract* :—

“ His deep piety, to which his life and works equally bear testimony, obtained for him the surnames of the Blessed (Beato) and Angelic (Angelico). According to Vasari, he might have lived at ease and secured wealth as well as honour by his art, which he well understood even in his youth; but for the sake of his peace and tranquillity, and particularly for the benefit of his soul, he preferred to enter the order of S. Domenico. He never painted for money, but willingly satisfied any application for his works if his Superior permitted him; he was so humble, so little desirous of honours, that when Pope Nicholas V. wished to confer on him the archbishopric of Florence, on account of his holy life, he prayed the pontiff to appoint another, as he did not feel himself called to a situation of authority. He never began his work without prayer, and so entirely did his subject fill his soul, that he was frequently interrupted by tears

* I have borrowed this quotation from the excellent English translation which has recently been made of Kugler's *Handbook of Painting*, edited by Mr. Eastlake, who has enriched the work with copious notes.

when representing the sufferings of the Redeemer. Hence he considered what he had painted as a special gift from Heaven, and never ventured to improve it.

“This profound serenity of feeling, this pure and holy frame of mind, this confiding devotedness, form the never-failing characteristics of Fra Giovanni’s works. He knew nothing of human anxieties, of struggle with passion, of victory over it; it is a glorified and more blessed world which he endeavours to reveal to our view. He seeks to invest the forms he places before us with the utmost grace his hand could lend them; the sweetest expression beams in all their countenances, an harmonious grace guides all their movements, particularly where the action is expressed by the treatment of the drapery. The most cheerful colours, like spring flowers, are selected for the draperies, and a profusion of golden ornaments is lavished over the whole: every auxiliary has been employed that could give a new glory to these holy subjects. With a peculiar religious awe he adheres scrupulously to traditional types, and ventures on none of the innovations which were already introduced into art at Florence; these would have been a disturbing element to the childlike serenity of his mind. Of all artists, Fiesole is the most perfect example of this style, but in him likewise it appears most de-

cidedly in all its restrictedness. He is inimitable in his representations of angels and glorified saints—weak, timid and embarrassed, when he introduces man in his human nature.”

How touchingly beautiful is the character of Fra Angelico, chastened by a holy simplicity and purity of feeling which seem to belong more to heaven than earth! He was perhaps the most unsullied representative of the early Christian school of art, in which no earthly passions mingled, no jarring rudeness or unhallowed thought ever sullied the sanctity and beauty of faith.

“How calm and beautiful, when Art was young,
The Seraph-sisters o’er the Painter hung,
Ere his deep power was strain’d by passions rude,
Or scatter’d in delicious lassitude!
Pure as the lily in her own long hands,
Bent like some humbler flower, the Virgin stands,
Whilst by the grace which from her forehead shone
The Church made Art’s great progeny its own*.”

Art subsequently took a totally new direction under Michael Angelo and his contemporaries; it was no longer the humble servant of the Church, the handmaid of faith; but, recurring to the early times of Grecian Art, these painters adopted the antique for their model, and introduced a new standard of beauty. If we rightly study the two

* ‘Graphidæ, or Characteristics of Painters, by Henry Reeve, Esq.’

schools, we shall learn to appreciate the true excellences of each. The divine character of faith shines forth in the one, with a clear and silver light, as the moon reflects and softens the glorious brightness of a greater luminary ; while in the latter school, the capabilities of Art are unfolded in greater vigour and fulness, and we are made to feel how glorious are these powers which God has given to man, and how wide and manifold their application. Rafael belonged to both these schools—Michael Angelo strictly to the latter. In studying Rafael's pictures we perceive several distinct changes in style, in which may be traced a transition from the early Christian feeling in Art to the new form which it had taken under the Florentine school, and regarded in this light the productions of such a master are extremely interesting and important, forming, as it were, a history of Art in that period. But we must leave Rafael for the present.

Of the same pure school of Christian art was Gentile Fabriano, a disciple of Fra Angelico. The difference between the two is thus beautifully given by the author from whom I have already so largely quoted : “ Fiesole and Gentile are like two brothers, both highly gifted by nature, both full of the most refined and amiable feelings ; but the one became a friar, the other a knight. We compare the pic-

tures of Gentile to the poems of the Minnesingers ; they seem to breathe the joys of spring ; they have an air of inexpressible serenity, clouded by no doubt, no anxiety. A childlike delight in splendour and golden ornaments (which he uses in the greatest profusion, without however perplexing the eye by excess) pervades all his works."

The art received a great impetus from Giovanni di Maso, or Masaccio, who was also of the Florentine school ; his compositions are graceful, easy, and natural ; the foreshortening excellent, and the colouring harmonious and delicate : he discontinued the use of gold and silver ornaments in painting. The chapel of the Holy Sacrament in the church of the Carmine in Florence was painted by this artist : Valery calls it the source whence sprang Italian painting, as it was there that Perugino, Fra Bartolommeo, Michael Angelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Rafael, and Andrea del Sarto studied. Masaccio died at the early age of twenty-seven, and in regarding his works we can but wonder at all he effected for the advancement of Art.

Baccio della Porta, better known by the name of Fra Bartolommeo, entered the cloister at the age of thirty-six, in consequence of a hasty vow, and for four years he never touched a pencil ; after that time he devoted himself with ever-increasing ardour to the pursuit of Art. It is said that he was

so deeply affected by the ignominious death of his friend Savonarola, that during four years he led the most secluded life, shutting himself up in his cell, and never touching a pencil. He was aroused from this state of apathy by the arrival of Rafael in Florence, with whom he formed a close friendship, as likewise with Michael Angelo; from the study of their works he acquired a breadth and freedom of style, while he retained the tenderness and dignity which were his own. His subjects are all sacred, and he invests his Holy Families and Madonnas with a charm peculiar to himself. The disposition of his draperies is at times grand, and Lanzi says he was the first who studied from drapery arranged on a wooden figure.

Masaccio died in 1443, and in 1447 Michael Angelo Buonarrotti, "the Dante of art," was born. Art with all its mysteries and its beauties revealed itself to him, and his vigorous intellect grasped its highest end and object. A philosopher as well as an artist, his works are imbued with a spirit of grandeur and sublimity which appears almost supernatural. It would perhaps be difficult to determine in which branch Michael Angelo most excelled,—painting, sculpture, architecture, or poetry; in all he has given proofs of his powerful and varied genius. His frescos in the Sistine Chapel are still the wonder and study of all artists; his statue of

Moses at Rome, and those in Florence, are the admiration of every age; St. Peter's remains a monument of his architectural skill; and his poetry, though little known, and often obscure, contains profound reflections, which open to us the workings of his mind, and in this light have a peculiar interest. His aspirations after beauty and truth—ideas with him synonymous—are expressed in the purest and most poetical language. It was from the ever-fresh fountains of his own mind that he drew large draughts of inspiration, and they never seem to have failed him. Many of his sonnets are addressed to Beauty, or rather the Beautiful in Art, which he personifies under a female character. In the following lines you will see in what form this idea presented itself to his mind.

“Beauty was given at my birth to serve
As my vocation's faithful exemplar,
The light and mirror of two sister-arts :
Who otherwise believes, in judgement errs.
She alone lifts the eye up to that height
For which I strive, to sculpture and to paint.
O rash and blind the judgement that diverts
To sense the beauty which in secret moves,
And raises each sound intellect to Heaven !
No eye infirm the interval may pass
From mortal to divine, nor thither rise
Where without grace to ascend the thought is vain.”

This is the man whose works now open on me, —the friend of Lorenzo de' Medici, the wonder of his own and succeeding ages. To Lorenzo he was indebted for encouragement in the pursuit of the path in which he attained such celebrity. We must not look for elegance and grace in the works of Buonarrotti ; his power is shown in the expression of strength and grandeur. Rafael wooed Art with the tenderness of a lover, but, with Dante, he loved in all true nobility ; Michael Angelo, on the contrary, looked on Art as a giant,—he wrestled, like Jacob, with the angel, and he overcame his antagonist, but to raise him higher than before. His mind was filled with conceptions too sublime to descend always to the exact detail of execution ; and with the impetuosity which often accompanies genius, he left many of his works half finished, to begin the sketch of others which then occupied his mind. One of the finest pictures in the world is the 'Raising of Lazarus,' in our National Gallery : this was designed by Michael Angelo, who, conscious of his deficiency in colouring, entrusted the completion of the picture to Sebastiano del Piombo, a Venetian artist. I could tell you much more of Michael Angelo, but time will not allow : I will however add one remark, in the words of Mr. Roscoe.

“The chief merit of this great man is not to be sought for in the remains of his pencil, nor even in his sculptures, but in the general improvement of the public taste which followed his astonishing productions. If his labours had perished with himself, the change which they effected in the opinions and the works of his contemporaries would still have entitled him to the first honours of the art. Those who from ignorance or from envy have endeavoured to depreciate his productions, have represented them as exceeding in their forms and attitudes the limits and the possibilities of nature,—as a race of beings the mere creatures of his own imagination: but such critics would do well to consider, whether the great reform to which we have alluded could have been effected by the most accurate representations of common life, and whether anything short of that ideal excellence which he only knew how to embody, could have accomplished so important a purpose. The genius of Michael Angelo was a leaven which was to operate on an immense and heterogeneous mass, the salt intended to give a relish to insipidity itself: it was therefore active, penetrating, energetic, so as not only effectually to resist the contagious effects of a depraved taste, but to communicate a portion of its spirit to all around*.”

We must expect a falling off after this period. Michael Angelo had few imitators, but the principles which he unfolded in art gave it a new character,—a fact which we see strikingly illustrated in the works of Rafael after he had imbibed the spirit of grandeur from the study of his great contemporary. Still Florence produced many fine painters, and, though the excellence of the Florentines at all times consisted in design, some

* Roscoe's *Life of Lorenzo de' Medici*.

amongst them were good colourists. I shall subjoin a list of the eminent artists who belonged to this school of painters, in order that, when I speak of their works, you may class them under their proper heads. I wish you to have a clear idea of the schools into which the Italian artists are divided.

A.D. 1200.

Cimabue.—Giotto.—Simone Memmi.—Fra Angelico da Fiesole.

A.D. 1400.

Masaccio, or Giovanni del Maso.—Filippo Lippi.—Baccio della Porta, or Fra Bartolommeo.—Michael Angelo Buonarrotti.—Leonardo da Vinci.

A.D. 1500.

Daniele Ricciarelli, better known as Daniele da Volterra.—Andrea Vanucchi, or Andrea del Sarto.—Cristofano Allori.—Alessandro Allori, called also Bronzino.—Santi di Titi.—Vanni.—Cigoli.—Carlo Dolci.—Baroccio.

LETTER VI.

Florence, November 24th.

SINCE I last wrote we have spent several mornings in the Gallery. It is open every day from nine o'clock till three. The edifice which contains this noble collection was built by Vasari*, the friend of Michael Angelo, and is called the Ufizii, or public offices, to which I believe the lower apartments are devoted. The Gallery consists of two long parallel corridors, united at one end by a shorter one: their walls are lined with paintings, amongst which however few are deserving attention. On each side stand ancient sarcophagi, busts of Roman emperors, and statues. We began, catalogue in hand, to look at each minutely, and they well repay such examination; but finding that this would occupy too much time, we soon turned to those parts of the Gallery which contain the most celebrated paintings and statues. These we found in small rooms, opening from the long

* Vasari wrote a celebrated work, the *Lives of the Italian Painters*.

corridors, and the Tribune was the first we entered. Its narrow bounds enclose the master-pieces of Italy's greatest artists, and some of the choicest statues of antiquity : here is the Venus de' Medici—

“The bending statue which enchants the world,”

the Listening Slave, the Young Apollo, the Wrestlers, the Dancing Faun ; while the St. John and the Fornarina of Rafael, Del Sarto's Madonna, and Guercino's Sibyl, with many other treasures of painting, hang around these walls.

I will not fill my letter with words which can convey no ideas to your mind, nor attempt any description of the Venus ; I will simply tell you my own impression of it. At first (must I own it?) my eye rested unsatisfied on this statue ; the goddess who enslaves all hearts seemed to fall far short of my idea of feminine beauty ; but as I gazed on her long and earnestly, the small head and insipid face, which at first caught my attention, were forgotten, and, conscious alone of the elegance of form and the exquisite grace which pervades the whole figure, I stood a silent and delighted admirer before her. By grace I do not mean mere loveliness, which is but one form of grace : in its proper sense, grace includes all that pleases the eye and satisfies the mind,—the absence of everything which

can offend or is unnatural : attitude, to be graceful, must be free from constraint and affectation ; but recollect that grace may exist with strength, and be found in the expression of any action of the mind, its passions as well as its gentleness. There is exquisite grace, for instance, in the Madonnas of Rafael, but there is also grace in the figures of his Sibyls. A more admirable specimen of this attribute of beauty could scarcely be presented to a novice like myself than the Venus de' Medici, and I think of my visit to her this morning as the first of many delightful lessons in art I hope to have during my residence in Italy. I could not help laughing to see a gentleman (an American I believe), after gazing in speechless delight at the statue, turn to leave the room, and on reaching the curtain which covers the entrance, look back and kiss his hand to her, uttering at the same time a gentle "Addio !"

We passed from the Tribune to the Hall of Niobe. At one end of this lofty and spacious saloon stands Niobe, and around are ranged her children, in every attitude of despair and death ; some of these statues are very fine. The anguish depicted on the face of Niobe, as she attempts to shield her youngest child from the darts of the deities whose fury she has provoked, speaks to the heart : the figure is much larger than life, but

did not seem to me masculine, which it has been called. Winkelmann has considered this group of figures, including Niobe, as amongst the finest productions of art, but his opinion has had many opponents. They are supposed to be the production of Scopas*, a celebrated Grecian sculptor, who flourished in the fifth century B.C. and were the favourite study of Guido. The Venus de' Medici is said to be by Cleomenes; it was discovered in the ruins of Adrian's Villa near Tivoli, and brought to Florence in 1649. In an adjoining room was a statue which I think almost more beautiful than any we have yet seen; it is antique, and represents the Genius of Death leaning on an extinguished torch.

The schools of painting next invited attention; the cabinet of Baroccio, and that of the Venetian school, offered much to interest us; it was not until we were exhausted with admiration that we left the Gallery.

Our stay in Florence at this time must necessarily be very short. We are anxious to reach Rome: November is far advanced, and we ought even now to be settled in our winter-quarters. We

* Scopas was a native of the island of Paros, so renowned for its beautiful marble. There is a statue of Venus by Scopas, which was considered even superior to the celebrated one by Praxiteles.

hear daily of the crowds flocking on before us, and of the great difficulty of obtaining accommodation. In spring, however, we intend to return, and visit again all that has interested us in this beautiful city.

From the Gallery we went to the church of Santa Croce, which from the tombs it contains has been called the Westminster Abbey of Italy.

“In Santa Croce’s holy precincts lie
Ashes which make it holier, dust which is
Even in itself an immortality.”

Here has Florence at length done justice to the memory of her Dante—not a solitary, though a striking instance of the fact, that posterity lavishes with jealous eagerness honours on those who have in life met only with persecution and injustice.

“Di Dante mal fur l’opre conosciute,
E ’l bel desio, da quel popolo ingrato,
Che solo ai gusti manca di salute*.”

In vain his fellow-citizens entreated that his ashes might be brought to Florence; the people of Ravenna, proud of having received the homeless stranger, and sheltered him in his last days,

* “Ill did his thankless countrymen repay
The fine desire : that which the good and great
So often from the insensate many meet,
That evil guerdon did our Dante find.”

(Southey’s Translation.)

would not resign his dust. In viewing the monuments of Italy's greatest poet and greatest artist, thus standing side by side, we cannot help feeling that their memories ought to live together: their minds were of the same bold and noble stamp, their genius equally single and individual in its character, their imaginations alike eagle-winged. There is nothing more beautiful to my mind than the appreciation which one noble spirit has of the powers of another, and I cannot help remarking how true a worshiper Dante had in Buonarrotti. "In every one of the compositions of Michael Angelo," says an accomplished writer, "we perceive traces of his exceeding love and admiration for Dante. It is asserted that he knew the whole of the *Divina Commedia* by heart, so greatly had he laboured at the study of its profound thoughts and its inimitable style. Whoever has meditated upon the productions of these two extraordinary minds, will be constrained to confess that never did two souls agree with so perfect a harmony; whether we look at the awful and terrible nature of their imaginings, at the loftiness of their sentiments, or at the perfectness of their representations."

When a petition was sent to Leo the Tenth, entreating him to raise a monument in Florence to the memory of Dante, Michael Angelo signed it in these remarkable words: "Io, Michele Angelo,

scultore, il medesimo, a vostra Santità supplico, offerendomi al divin Poeta fare la sepultura sua condecante e in loco onorevole in questa città.*"

But the offer was not accepted, and it is only within the last century that Florence has raised this monument to her greatest poet. Canova was the artist, and the work is worthy of him. I must close these remarks with one of two sonnets which Michael Angelo wrote on Dante.

"There is no tongue to speak his eulogy ;
Too brightly burn'd his splendour for our eyes :
Far easier to condemn his injurers,
Than for the tongue to reach his smallest worth.
He to the realms of sinfulness came down,
To teach mankind ; ascending then to God,
Heaven unbarr'd to him her lofty gates,
To whom his country hers refused to ope.
Ungrateful land, to its own injury
Nurse of his fate ! Well too does this instruct,
That greatest ills fall to the perfectest.
And 'midst a thousand proofs let this suffice,
That, as his exile had no parallel,
So never was there man more great than he."

The monument to Michael Angelo, which was erected by his pupils soon after his decease, stands next to that of Dante. In front of a sarcophagus are three figures, which support it, represent-

* " I, Michele Angelo, sculptor, supplicate your Holiness, offering myself to erect to the divine Poet a monument, suitable to him, and in an honourable place in this city."

ing Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture ; but the name of Buonarotti confers on this work its chief interest.

Michael Angelo died at Rome, and was to have been buried in St. Peter's ; but Cosmo the First caused the body to be stolen away by night and conveyed to Florence. The great artist had himself expressed a wish to be interred in the church of Santa Croce, in a spot from which Brunelleschi's Dome was seen,—that Dome which Michael Angelo, when leaving Florence for Rome to undertake the erection of St. Peter's, addressed in these words :

“ Come te non voglio—meglio di te non posso*.”

Galileo worthily takes his place by the side of Dante and Michael Angelo,—a glorious triumvirate ! If Dante was the father of the Italian language, and Michael Angelo the founder of a new school of art, it was left to Galileo, amidst the difficulties and obstacles which a blind superstition threw in his way, to discover and establish one of the greatest laws of nature. There is something painfully interesting in the history of this philosopher. After a life spent in the unwearied pursuit of science, having been appointed in 1589 professor of mathematics at Pisa, his native place,

* “ Like thee I will not—better than thee I cannot.”

and afterwards at the learned university of Padua, —living under the friendship and patronage of Ferdinand and Cosmo de' Medici, descendants of those who had rendered the name so famous,— he found himself in his old age surrounded by enemies. The bold and uncompromising spirit in which he dared to assert his opinions was a source of terror to the Church, and particularly to the Jesuits, whose fears had been already aroused by the equally daring although differently directed spirit of Luther. Galileo was summoned to appear before the Inquisition of Rome in 1631, the year succeeding that in which he had published his celebrated ‘Dialogue on the Ptolemaic and Copernican Systems.’ He was examined several times before the holy tribunal, and commanded publicly to recant his errors, to disclaim the doctrines he had taught, and to perform strict penance. To this degradation, against which I cannot but hope and believe his spirit would earlier in life have risen with a just indignation, the poor old man, then seventy years of age, enfeebled by bodily infirmity, submitted. Yet at the moment of concluding his recantation, a spark of his wonted fire returned, and he exclaimed, “*Ma pur si muove!*” (Nevertheless it *does* move!) He was from this time watched with a jealous eye by the Inquisition; and, though allowed to live on his

own estate at Arcetri, he was a prisoner. Trials were multiplied around his last days; his favourite daughter died, and in 1636 he became totally blind. His patience and resignation were beautiful; in a letter to a friend he says, "So it pleases God, it shall therefore please me also!"

But I have wandered far from Santa Croce. Machiavelli and Alfieri have both a place here: on the monument of the great politician and historian are inscribed these simple words, supposed to be uttered by an allegorical figure:

"*Tanto nomini nullum par elogium**."

After a morning of most pleasurable excitement, we returned to our hotel to dinner. While engaged in eating it—rather a tedious process in Italy—we heard a solemn kind of chanting in the street, and hastening to the window found it arose from a funeral procession. The evening was dark and gloomy; the narrow street beneath us was filled with the mournful train; a number of men in black robes, which concealed the face, preceded and followed the bier, each one bearing a torch, the red and flickering light of which fell strongly on these unearthly figures, and revealed the livid features of the uncovered dead; whilst the low monotonous tones of the Requiem, which

* "To such a name no eulogy is sufficient."

the priests were chanting, heightened the effect of the scene. I find these processions usually take place in the evening : the body is conveyed in this manner to the church ; there it is left all night, surrounded by large wax tapers, and watched I believe by a priest, who offers up prayers for the soul of the departed. In the morning it is interred, without any other ceremony.

The scene we had witnessed was so interesting, that I made many inquiries respecting this ceremony, and learned that the figures dressed in black were *Fratelli* (brethren) of the "Misericordia." This fraternity strikes me as being one of the most truly Christian institutions which have sprung from Catholicism. Its members appear to be actuated by a perfectly unostentatious benevolence ; amongst them are persons of all ranks, from the prince to the peasant. They are wrapped in a dress which conceals the face and person, and all unite in the duties imposed on them by the laws of the society. A bell, whose deep and solemn tone is heard in every part of Florence, summons the brothers of the Misericordia to the spot where their exertions are required. If accident or illness claim their attention, the sufferer is conveyed to the hospital of the fraternity, and, if life be not extinct, every means is used to restore him ; he is watched continually, and

his wants carefully supplied : if death ensue, he is buried at the expense of the society, and masses are said for his soul. A short time ago there was a fire in Florence, and the Grand Duke, who is the head of the Misericordia, was actively engaged, in the dress of the brotherhood, in saving the lives and property of those exposed to the flames. Their vow enjoins them to be ready at all hours of the night or day to obey the summons which may call them to the succour of the distressed. Many undertake the laborious and painful duties of this institution as an expiation for sin, but more, I am inclined to hope, from a true spirit of Christian charity. There is a chapel near the Cathedral connected with the Order, in which six *Fratelli* are always in attendance, and where mass is performed every day.

Tomorrow we depart : were it not that Rome is before us, and that we leave Florence with the hope of returning in the spring, I should quit it with great reluctance. This has been a busy day ; palaces and churches, trunks and vetturini, have occupied every hour. We first visited the Palazzo Pitti, the history of which is curious. It was erected by Luca Pitti, one of a noble and powerful family at Florence, who, expending on it vast sums, boasted that it should rival the abodes of princes. In 1464, when Cosmo de'

Medici was in the height of his power, Luca Pitti endeavoured to supplant him; and on his death, availing himself of the feebleness of Pietro the son of Cosmo, he claimed and gained the highest office in the state. The Florentines were indignant at the attempts he made to enslave them; and Luca Pitti at length, stripped of all power, was brought to penury; whilst his magnificent palace, in the erection of which he had ruined himself, was completed and subsequently inhabited by the rival family of the Medici. It is now the residence of the Grand Duke of Tuscany.

The suite of apartments through which we passed is furnished in the most splendid manner; the ceilings are painted in fresco, the cornices and ornaments richly gilt, and the tables of scagliola and pietra-dura are of the most exquisite designs. But, far more than all, within these rooms are contained the choice and extensive collection of pictures known by the name of the Pitti Gallery. We wandered through room after room, gazing with wonder and delight on these glorious works of art. The ‘*Madonna della Seggiola*’ by Rafael is here; I could scarcely take my eyes from it; there is such a charm in the mingled dignity and tenderness of her expression, that it seemed to be a new revelation of beauty to me. In one of the rooms is a singular and very powerful picture represent-

ing the Fates, by Michael Angelo—one of his few easel-paintings. ‘Catiline’s Conspiracy,’ by Salvatore Rosa, is the first historical picture I have seen of this artist; it is admirable, but I was more delighted with his landscapes, of which there are many in this collection. Nature is seen under his pencil in her wildest moods. There is a Holy Family by Murillo, which resembles that in the Dulwich Gallery. One more picture I must mention, the ‘Judith’ of Cristofano Allori, remarkable for the harmonious colouring and the truth of expression in her beautiful face.

In a small room in this palace stands one of Canova’s two famous statues of Venus; the head is truly Grecian, the figure and face full of grace and beauty. One or two spots have lately appeared in the marble, which are great blemishes; to this misfortune the sculptor must be liable; sometimes the statue comes out perfect from his hand, and in a few months dark spots and veins begin to show themselves. Canova has another Venus, of which I have only seen a copy; it seems to me a much finer conception, and the character of the figure is evidently taken from the Venus de’ Medici, yet without any servile imitation. I have seen copies of these two statues standing side by side, and the similarity was very striking.

Yesterday we visited the church of Santa Maria

Novella, which from its beauty Michael Angelo called “*la Sposa*” (the Bride). The exterior is rough and unfinished: it has three fine aisles, with gothic arches, which diminish in size as they approach the high altar, giving an appearance of great length to the nave as you stand at the western door. To this church is attached a convent of Dominican friars, where in times of persecution the Inquisition held its sittings: what power this tribunal now exerts I know not; I believe it still exists, though deprived of much of its terror. In this church Boccaccio assembled the ladies and cavaliers of his *Decamerone*, previous to their quitting the infected city.

Leaving the Pitti Palace this morning, we went to the church of San’ Lorenzo. Here was much to interest us,—not actually in the building, which I observed too little to describe, but in the adjoining Chapel of the Medici and in the Sacristy. The former, which is very magnificent, was begun in 1604 by Ferdinand the First, Duke of Tuscany, and intended for the mausoleum of his family: it is not yet completed, although an incredibly large sum of money has been expended on it. The arms of Tuscany, in *pietra-dura* of mother-of-pearl, cornelian, coral, lapis-lazuli, oriental alabaster, malachite, &c., are placed around the Chapel, amidst slabs of the most beautiful and costly marbles, jas-

pers, and agates. Large sarcophagi of porphyry, surmounted by bronze statues, are erected to the memory of the Medici. The ceiling, which was covered with scaffolding, is nearly completed in fresco-painting by Benvenuti, one of the best artists of the present day.

But I must tell you of the Sacristy, which we next visited. It contains the tombs of Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici, the work of Michael Angelo. Long and ardently have I desired to see these monuments, for they are the theme of every tongue. And now that my curiosity is satisfied, and I find myself unable to understand or even discover their beauty, I am vexed with myself and disappointed. I felt whilst gazing on them what one of the Caracci meant, when he said, "*di Michel Angiol la terribil via.*" There is none of that grace of form and beauty of expression in these statues upon which the eye loves to rest; all is giant strength, and a feeling of awe arises in the mind unmingled with pleasure; the large masses of drapery are heavy, and every nerve and muscle seems to stand forth to view. The faces of the allegorical figures are not handsome, but there is an expression of concentrated power and energy, which to an artist's eye is the production of a master genius, but which does not address itself to the heart. If it is true that, in order fully

to appreciate the works of any great artist, the mind of the spectator must for the time be able in some measure to identify itself with the mind of the artist, this is pre-eminently the case with the works of Michael Angelo.

Having thus unwillingly confessed the vexation I felt in seeing these statues, let me describe the tombs. Both Lorenzo and Giuliano are in armour, seated; beneath the former are allegorical figures, representing the Dawn and Twilight; under the latter are those of Day and Night. Of all these statues, that of Lorenzo is the only one I really admire; he is absorbed in thought, and there is a simple majesty about the whole figure that is truly sublime. Of the others I will not venture to speak.

In our way home we drove to the manufactory of Pietra-dura. This is a kind of mosaic, in which stone only is used; the designs are chiefly flowers, butterflies or shells, and the effect produced is beautiful. Each colour is formed by a different piece, curiously fitted and cemented into its place; except when the shading of the stone (as in jasper, agate, and onyx,) is skilfully adapted to that of the pattern. When completed, the surface is smoothed and polished, and the divisions are scarcely perceptible. We saw an exquisite table in progress

for an English lady: the ground was black, and upon it lay a branch of white jessamine.

Let me tell you of one more among the many churches which we have visited in Florence. The Annunziata is splendid, rather than beautiful, in its decorations, but it contains much to interest a stranger: the ceiling is painted by Andrea del Sarto, and it has bassi-rilievi by Giovanni di Bologna, his pupil Tacca, and Thorwaldsen. One of the many chapels which open from the principal aisle is interesting, from its having been granted, at his earnest request, to Giovanni di Bologna, as a burial-place for himself and the artists of Flanders, his countrymen: it is enriched with many works of art.

In the cloisters of the Annunziata is Andrea del Sarto's famous 'Madonna del Sacco'; it is sadly injured by time, but enough remains to show that the praises lavished on it are well deserved*.

* What Lanzi says of Andrea del Sarto is true,—that "he does not possess that elevation of ideas which forms the poet and the heroic painter; naturally modest, gentle, sensible, as he is said to have been, he seems to have impressed their character on all his pencil touched. The portico of the Annunziata, by him transformed to an exquisite gallery, is the fittest place to judge of this. Those outlines which procured him the name of 'Andrea the faultless,'—those ideas of gentle faces, whose smiles remind us of the simplicity and grace of Correggio, those well-conducted fabrics, those vestments

The number of existing Madonnas, from the pencil of various artists, has led to the custom of attaching to each some distinguishing epithet; thus, the ‘*Madonna del Sacco*’ (of the sack) is so called from a sack of corn against which St. Joseph is leaning,—the ‘*Madonna della Seggiola*,’ of Rafael, from the armchair in which the Virgin is seated,—the ‘*Madonna del Gatto*,’ of Correggio, from a cat introduced in the picture.

Tomorrow we leave Florence. Our journey will occupy six days: we have moreover the pleasant anticipation of bad roads and bad accommodation; but Rome is before us!

adapted to every condition, that easy manner of folding, those popular expressions of curiosity, wonder, confidence, compassion, enjoyment, that never transgress the bounds of seemliness, that are understood at first sight, and gently search the heart without perturbing it, are beauties easier felt than described.”

LETTER VII.

Ronciglione, November 30th.

WE have had a weary five days' pilgrimage, and I open my desk in no very amiable mood to write to you; but tomorrow at noon we shall be in Rome, and I must describe our journey before I reach that city, when things of deeper interest will crowd upon me.

We resolved to engage a *Vetturino* to convey us from Florence to Rome. A *Vetturino*, I must tell you, is a person who journeys from place to place, undertaking to furnish travellers either with horses alone, or, if required, with a carriage also; sometimes he provides for them every accommodation on the road. It is of course a slower mode of travelling than by post, as the same horses perform the whole journey, and require rest in the middle of the day; but it has some advantages, and we were inclined to try it.

We left Florence early on Tuesday morning, and

accomplished the astonishing distance of about thirty miles in seven hours ! It rained as we drove out of Florence, and we had heavy showers all day. We slept at Poggibonsi, (or, as I heard it called, "Punchy-bunchy,") where our accommodation appeared at the time uncomfortable enough, although we have since learned to esteem it, by contrast at least, luxurious. The second day we reached Buonconvento : here Henry the Seventh, emperor of Germany, was supposed to have been poisoned by a Dominican friar at the time of receiving the sacrament.

We remained an hour at Siena, to rest the horses, and walked to the cathedral. I cannot echo the praises which are lavished on its beauty ; for it is built like the Duomo of Florence, in black and white marble, and presents the same chequered appearance. The pavement of the aisles contains some fine mosaics, representing Scriptural subjects ; it is covered with a wooden frame, part of which was raised to let us see the 'Sacrifice of Isaac,' one of the most beautiful of the designs ; the figure of Abraham, raising his sword as about to strike his son, is very spirited : this work was executed by Beccafiumi, or Mecherino, a Sienese artist of the fifteenth century. The pulpit in this church is the work of Giovanni Pisano, and its bassi-relievi in pure white marble nearly equal

those of the Baptistery at Pisa. In the sacristy we saw some splendidly illuminated missals. Its walls are painted in fresco by Pietro Perugino, and his pupils Rafael and Pinturicchio. Here is also a group of the Graces—" *statue molto antiche*," as our guide informed us; although mutilated, the figures have all the classic elegance of ancient sculpture: it was discovered in digging the foundations of the Cathedral. On our way back to the inn we passed through the principal piazza or square of the town; it is curious, from its fan-like shape, the radii being formed by broad lines of stone, diverging from a marble fountain, the sweetness and purity of whose waters are mentioned by Dante.

Siena claims our notice as one of the cities which first promoted the revival of Art during the Middle Ages. Early in the thirteenth century lived Guido da Siena, the precursor of Nicolo Pisano: although his works evince much of that hard and stiff formality which was the characteristic of the Byzantine style, yet we must regard them with interest as the first promise of a new æra in Art.

Guido was followed by Duccio, who lived in the beginning of the following century. The paintings of this artist were held in great estimation by his fellow-citizens; and on the completion of a large picture, it was conveyed to the church for which

it had been designed, with great demonstration of public joy, and accompanied by a large procession. Many of his works still exist, and bear evidence of the power he possessed; he was one of those masters who, producing but little themselves, and attaining to but an imperfect knowledge of the mechanism of art, yet by their deep and solemn feeling of its capabilities, exercised a powerful influence over their own and succeeding ages. One of his paintings is preserved in the cathedral, with the erection of which, in 1221, it is coeval. Duccio is mentioned by Rumohr as one of the most illustrious masters of the school which he designates the Byzantine-Tuscan; this existed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, until Art, under Michael Angelo and his contemporaries, was freed from the mannerism of the Byzantine style, and assumed a new character.

I have spoken of this style, without perhaps giving you a sufficiently clear idea of what it really was. Under the last years of the Empire of Rome, Art fell, with every other noble source of human improvement and refinement, into total decay. "The technical part," says M. Rio, "was alone preserved, like the deceitful bark of a tree, which remains when all its sap has been dried; this was transmitted from age to age, but neither the paint-

er nor the sculptor possessed the power to create, —at least they executed but half their work; the sculptor could indeed knead the clay, but to breathe into it the breath of life was beyond his powers.” Transported to Constantinople, Art became a courtly guest; but its highest aims were forgotten, and it languished in a miserable existence. It is a subject of extreme interest to me, to trace the gradual rise of Christian on the decay of Pagan Art; I can but briefly allude to it here, and a few general observations must content me.

Christianity at first rejected Art, as a remnant of that idolatry which it came to overthrow, and it was not until the fourth century, when, under the protection of Constantine, the new religion was publicly received, that Art was emancipated from the opposition made to it by the Christians. “It had lain dormant,” says Kugler, “through long centuries of revolutions, ferments, and popular migrations; but at length, like the butterfly, casting off its lifeless imprisoning shell, it unfolded its light wings for a free and upward flight.” The earliest forms in which Christian Art is presented to us are rude in the extreme; in Rome are still preserved a few specimens of painting and mosaic, which show the small advance that had been made by artists, before the desolating wars of succeed-

ing centuries checked, and at length arrested, all progress. In Byzantium, the new metropolis, Art was indeed encouraged, but it had degenerated into a mere servile system of imitating the works of Roman artists; the true principles of Art were forgotten, the spirit was gone, while the form alone remained. The distinguishing features of the Byzantine style are a total absence of nature in the forms, hard stiff draperies, a deficiency in feeling and expression, and an inordinate love of brilliant colours and tasteless ornaments. From this school, the artists whom I have mentioned were the first to emerge; and Giunta da Pisa, and Guido da Siena, are names held in just veneration by the cities that gave them birth.

Our third day's journey brought us to Radicofani, a wild mountain village, situated on the summit of a lofty range of volcanic hills, which we had been ascending almost all day, through a country so bleak and desolate that scarcely a trace of man was to be seen. A heavy rain came on as we approached Radicofani, and the village and surrounding mountains were shrouded in a thick mist, which threw a mysterious gloom over the scene. It was a place to awaken all one's recollections of Italian romance, and seemed so fitted for the exploits of banditti, that stories without number of their fearful deeds rushed on our minds: luckily

the wild inn at Radicofani, barrack-like though it was, dispersed them all. We found it however, in spite of its wide corridors and cheerless halls, comparatively comfortable, and over a blazing wood fire we forgot the dismal scene without. In the evening we had a visit from a vender of casts from the Baths of San' Filippo. Near Radicofani is a mountain stream, which in its course leaves a deposit of carbonate of lime and sulphur; this water is carried through wire sieves, and, falling in spray on hollow moulds which are placed to receive it, in time forms these casts; we bought a fine head of Saint Peter.

Montefiascone was our fourth resting-place, if such it may be called, where rest was none. Before I introduce you to the horrors of a real Italian inn, I must tell you of our pleasant journey to it, how brightly the morning broke, and what a delicious balmy feeling the air had after the rain of the preceding night; it scarcely seemed a November day. The road lay for some distance through the same bleak mountain scenery; but at length vegetation returned, and the Lake of Bolsena, with its deep shores, surrounded by fine forests sweeping down to the water's edge, seemed the more beautiful from the contrast. Oaks and chestnuts still retain their leaves here, though tinged with the rich hues of autumn. At Ponte Centino we

first saw the Papal arms over the custom-house, where we stopped to have our trunks sealed and our passports examined. Acquapendente, through which we passed, is a pretty Italian-looking village, seated on the brow of a high rock.

As we ascended the hill on which Montefiascone stands, the sun was setting behind the distant chain of mountains which bounded the plain beneath us; they were lying in deep purple, while the nearer landscape was bathed in a flood of light, "brighter than burnished gold:" the air seemed filled with a glowing violet mist, and the trees in the foreground shone as in the splendour of a mid-day sun. I thought of Claude's beautiful pictures, and felt that it was from scenes like these he drew his inspiration. We lingered at the door of our inn until the sun had disappeared: how sudden was the change! the beautiful colours vanished in a moment, and all was left wrapt in a shadowy grey.

But now for our first miseries of travelling. Following my dear friends through a place half coach-house, half-stable, I mounted by a steep narrow staircase to our saloon, which, with its high-sounding name, we would gladly have exchanged for a clean English kitchen. The first glimpse I caught of it was enough, and I think we should have retreated very quickly to the carriage, could we have had horses to take us on; but there were

none, and those of our Vetturino were too much tired to proceed further. Patience therefore was our only remedy; so ordering a fire, we sat down to await the slow advent of dinner, with all the comfort of four doors and as many windows blowing on us, with the addition of volleys of smoke from the wide chimney, a stone floor (uncarpeted of course), and chill blasts which nothing could keep out. At length came *il pranzo*,—hot water-soup, with cheese grated into it,—a tough chicken, which no knife could penetrate,—one pigeon, and five larks! these, with two wretched chops, furnished forth our feast: you may suppose how soon it was dismissed. The fame of Montefiascone rests upon the reputation of its wine*, and the inhabitants seem to despise so simple a luxury as milk; we at least could get none, and waited for our coffee in vain. To our beds at last we were driven, cold, hungry and weary, but the less said of them the better.

* It is related that an ecclesiastical dignitary was once journeying from Germany to Rome; and being an excellent lover of good wine, he sent a servant on before him to taste the wine in each town they passed through,—desiring him to inscribe the word "*Est*" on the door of those inns where he should find good wine. The eyes of his reverence sparkled with joy, when on arriving at Montefiascone he saw "*Est! Est!! Est!!!*"—(much as to say, "good—better—best!") written up. Unhappily it was only too good for the traveller; he stopped, tasted, drank, and died.

Daybreak saw us on our way to Viterbo, where we revelled in the delights of a fine fire, and a breakfast worthy of an English hotel. Finding we could not reach Rome tonight, we have stopped at Ronciglione.

Rome, December 1st.

OUR journey is ended, and, as I write the date of my letter, strange feelings of wonder and delight pass through my mind. I ask myself again and again if I am indeed in Rome,—are my girlish visions become reality? Standing as it were on the threshold of this wonderful city, my thoughts run wild in anticipation of pleasures to come, and I can scarcely collect them sufficiently to write.

We arrived yesterday morning, and after our long tedious journey we gladly gave some hours to rest. Our first desire today was to find lodgings, that we might feel we were no longer travellers, and had once more a home. But I must carry you back to Ronciglione, if only that we may enter Rome together. Travellers in Italy have a strange fashion of turning night into day: the Vetturino usually obliges his party to rise at four o'clock, or sometimes even before that hour, and they stop proportionably early in the day. At seven or eight

o'clock in the evening the inns are generally quiet, and every one is seeking the rest which in the morning it is impossible to find. We did not choose to be thus at the mercy of our Vetturino's caprice, and engaged him with the proviso that we should start at whatever hour we pleased. However at Ronciglione, our rooms being (as is often the case) over the stables, at half-past two o'clock in the morning we were awakened by the trampling of horses and shrill voices beneath us; and we soon found, by the clapping of doors and the tread of footsteps, that all the house was stirring:—of course it was useless to think of sleep again; other carriages were departing, and we agreed to follow.

The sun rose gloriously, revealing the wide Campagna of Rome, which stretched around us as far as the eye could reach—a vast desert. Surely nothing on earth can be more imposing than the approach to Rome: for many miles in every direction the city is encompassed by barren tracts of country, scattered with ruins; the far-spreading waste lies in death-like silence, and the few human beings whom you meet are like spectres mourning over the destruction around. It is as if the curse of Heaven was on the country—as if, in sinking, the mighty empress of the world had drawn into the vortex that engulfed her the

whole surrounding country, leaving it, like herself, a vast and desolate ruin. As we advanced across this lonely Campagna, as every step brought us nearer to Rome, what thoughts crowded on our memory ! The contrast of former glory and present desolation presses upon the heart, and teaches a lesson which philosophy might vainly strive to inculcate.

The Campagna is thinly peopled, owing to its being infected with malaria, which gives rise to a species of low fever. The effects of this are dreadful during the summer months ; hundreds of the poorer inhabitants are annually swept off by it : all who can do so, fly from its fatal influence to the mountains, but poverty compels many to remain. These dwell in miserable hovels, and are principally shepherds, whose sallow faces and emaciated forms strongly excite compassion ; they wear a curious dress of sheep-skin, with the wool outside, generally dyed a dark mahogany colour ; and in addition to this have often a kind of apron of goat-skin. One of these picturesque figures we saw sitting on the side of a gentle slope, watching his flocks as they browsed below ; his wife was seated near him, in her bright scarlet boddice and green petticoat, with a pendent head-dress of white linen and silver bodkin, spinning thread from a long distaff, the spindle whirling quickly at her

side, while playful children sported around them : it was a group for an artist.

We knew that at twenty miles from Rome we might catch a glimpse of St. Peter's, and eagerly did we look for it. At length our longing eyes were gratified ; far in the distance rose "the wondrous dome ;" it was soon concealed from us by a hill, but it was enough to have seen it for a moment. About a mile from Rome we crossed the Tiber,—a muddy, insignificant river ; but its name had enchantment in it. We entered the city by the Porta del Popolo ; and, as we were detained some minutes at the gate for our passports, I had time to look around me. This entrance to Rome is very striking : the Piazza del Popolo is a fine square ; on one side, a winding terrace-road, lined with statues, leads to the Pincian Hill ; an Egyptian obelisk stands in the centre, and three of the principal streets branch off from it : we drove through one of them, the Corso, and amidst a whirl of strange sensations alighted at our hotel.

Rome, December 4th.

OUR lodgings are in the Piazza di Spagna, the part of the town most frequented by the English. We have yet seen little of Rome, from the illness of one of my friends ; for if our party were not com-

plete, the pleasure of our first impressions would be imperfect. But it seems happiness enough to sit quietly in our new apartments, with the consciousness that we are in Rome—that we have but to go forth whenever we desire, and that the Vatican, St. Peter's, the Coliseum, with treasures innumerable of antiquity and art, are all within our reach.

No one with a thinking mind can pass the gates of Rome without feeling that he is entering on a new and important æra in his life. The vague and undefined forms of history which our childhood has loved to dwell on, are about to become reality; our feet are now to press the very soil trodden in ages long past by the heroes and great men of Rome; we shall stand in the Forum, where Cicero stood, when his eloquence denounced the conspirators leagued with Catiline; we shall see the ruins of the Senate House, where in days of republican virtue the Roman senators sat to deliberate on the welfare of their country. Christian Rome too will claim our interest, and our faith will grow stronger as we think of those martyrs who here gloried in laying down their lives in the cause of religion. Some of the proudest monuments of ancient times are now before us, and Art will here unfold to us a thousand new and delightful forms of beauty. Petrarca, in one of his letters,

says: "You used, I remember, to warn me lest my ardour should cool, when, on arriving at Rome, I should find the aspect of the ruined city to fall short of the expectations which books and fame had led me to form. So far from it, observation has diminished nothing, but augmented everything. Rome was indeed greater, and her remains are greater, than I imagined. I wonder not any longer that the world was conquered by this city, but only that it was not conquered sooner*."

We have not confined ourselves however to the house, but have every day explored some part of the city. In one of these wanderings we found ourselves on a hill, to which we had ascended by a paved road, or *via cordonnata*. Imagine my delight, when I saw written at one corner of the fine square in which we stood, "Piazza del Campidoglio." We were indeed on the Capitol! From a long flight of steps, descending to the Forum, we first saw ancient Rome: immediately beneath us was an arch, which we afterwards found to be that of Septimus Severus: far in the distance rose the Coliseum. We did not then know that a few hundred paces would have brought us amidst the ruins of the Forum, or we should scarcely have been able to turn aside. On our way home we lost ourselves in a labyrinth of dirty streets, and

* *Epistolæ Familiares*, xiv.

turning the corner of a little square, came upon a building which we knew at once to be the Pantheon; its beautiful portico could not be mistaken. Nothing can be more delightful than to wander through these time-hallowed scenes, and our rambles will live in my memory.

LETTER VIII.

Rome, December 6th.

IN entering the cities of Italy which we have hitherto visited, I have endeavoured briefly to sketch their history, that you might with me feel the power of those associations which connect us with former ages, and the charm which the past throws over the present. But the history of Rome is too mighty a theme for such a review; it includes not the history of one city, or even one country, but that of the whole then known and civilized world. It would be impossible for me to attempt even an outline of the events which marked its progress, as it rose from a village of mud-built cottages to be the metropolis of the world. You are not unacquainted with these: the names of its kings, its consuls, its heroes, and its emperors are familiar to you, and I should but waste my time and weary you by repeating them. Still I desire, for my own sake as well as yours, to retrace some passages of the history of Rome, to follow her in

the days of her decline, and see how Papal power rose on the ruins of the Empire. Let me therefore follow the current of events, dwelling on those most interesting, and preserving the connexion as well as I am able. This will awaken your attention to the history of times which are important, both in their connexion with the past and their subsequent influence upon society.

The obscurity of the history of the Middle Ages gives to that æra a great interest: if it is melancholy to contemplate the reign of ignorance and superstition, how delightful to watch the re-awakening of the world, the dawn of light and hope in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries! It is of this period that I would speak to you. I will not dwell on the history of the Roman emperors: their lives are for the most part blotted with cruelty and despotism; and, although the picture is relieved occasionally by bright examples of virtue, these were rare, and the progress of luxury and effeminacy in the empire was feebly checked even by a Trajan, an Antonine, or an Aurelian. They might succeed in clearing the surface of some weeds, but the seeds of corruption were germinating, and sprang up with tenfold vigour under a Commodus or a Maximin.

The legions in whom the glory of Rome had consisted, who had fought and conquered under

republican virtue, no longer existed: sordid ambition had taken the place of patriotism, and the manly courage of the Roman soldiers was sunk in profligate idleness and effeminacy. In such a state did the barbarians of the north find the Roman empire; and in the first invasion of the Goths, which took place A.D. 250, Gallus the emperor was glad to purchase an ignominious peace. These dauntless people were for a time held in subjection by the arms of Aurelian, but new and more splendid victories awaited them.

In 324, Constantine the Great, after defeating Maxentius, his rival in power, removed the seat of empire from Rome to the ancient Byzantium, thenceforward called Constantinople. This was the death-blow to the city of Rome; from that time she became second, and never under the emperors regained her former position.

Constantine was the first emperor who favoured the Christians; he became a convert to their religion, and this unfortunate people began to repose, after years of persecution and suffering. The empire was divided, in 364, into two parts,—the Eastern being committed to Valens, who resided at Constantinople,—and the Western to Valentinian, who fixed his court at Milan. This separation gave another shock to the Roman power. The Goths, having obtained a decisive victory over the weak

Valens, ravaged Thrace and the adjoining countries, gaining confidence as they advanced into the territories of their enemies. Under Theodosius the Great, Emperor of the West, they were reduced to submission and retired from contest.

This wise and prudent monarch was respected even by his enemies; and, had his successors been men of equal courage and power, Italy might have been saved; but the torrent was fast gathering in the North which was to fall on this devoted land, and it was not such men as Honorius and Arcadius, the sons of Theodosius, who could stem its progress. I may mention here, as a proof of the increase of ecclesiastical power, that Ambrose, the archbishop of Milan, in consequence of some crime which Theodosius had committed, closed the gates of his church against him, and refused him permission to join in the services of religion, until by severe penance he had obtained absolution. Do you remember, in the National Gallery, a fine picture by Vandyke representing this circumstance?

While Arcadius was immersed in the pleasures of an Eastern court, and Honorius wasted his life in ease and idleness at Milan, the famous Alaric, king of the Goths, was preparing to invade Italy, A.D. 400. The consternation which the approach of his barbarian army spread is not to be described.

At first it was successfully opposed by Stilicho, the skilful and courageous general of Honorius, and Alaric was compelled to retreat; but, after having gained many victories over the Vandals, who under their king Radagaisus had besieged Florence and penetrated as far as Rome, Stilicho was disgraced and died by violence. His death betrayed the weakness of the court of Honorius: that cowardly prince had fled from Milan and taken refuge in Ravenna, believing himself safe within its walls, and protected by the morasses which surrounded the city. Alaric, who was ever on the watch, seized this moment again to pass the Alps, A.D. 408; and proceeding without opposition through the north of Italy, he occupied the unguarded passes of the Apennines, and marched towards Rome.

This city, whose very name had so long struck terror into her enemies, whose glory had filled the world, and which had remained for more than six centuries safe from the attacks of a foreign foe, —Rome, was now to be delivered into the hands of the rapacious barbarians. Alaric laid siege to it; and the unfortunate inhabitants, after enduring all the miseries of famine and plague, appealed to the mercy of the conqueror, and delivered their city into his power. Alaric received their tardy submission, on condition that the precious things

which could be removed—all the gold and silver contained within its walls—should be given up to him: when the senators asked, “What then do you leave us, O king?” the answer of the fierce warrior was, “Your lives!”

There was however one difference between the conquests of the Goths and those of the Huns and Vandals. The Goths were Christians, and their religious scruples saved the churches and sacred property from pillage*. The other two nations, being Pagans, were deterred by no such motives, and the valuable treasures of the churches were ruthlessly destroyed or carried off by them.

In the year 409, Alaric, who had deserted Rome for other conquests, again attacked the city: it

* The following striking anecdote is related of an incident which occurred during Alaric's last attack on Rome. A Gothic soldier entered the house of a Christian woman, and finding there vessels of gold and silver, he was about to seize them. The woman told him that they were not her property, but belonged to St. Peter, and that she only kept them for one of the churches; she then added, that he must do what he pleased. The soldier was astonished, and dared not touch the treasures; but he went and told the circumstance to Alaric, who ordered the vessels to be instantly carried back to the church. This was done; but the Romans were so struck with the generosity of the conqueror, and his preservation of the holy vessels, that they accompanied them to the church in solemn procession. The wild Goths no sooner heard what passed than they left their plunder, and ran and joined the rest.

was subdued, and given up for six days to the pillage of the barbarians, who, after stripping it of everything valuable, left it, that Alaric might forward his plan of conquering all Italy. In this he succeeded but too well; the Goths became possessors of this lovely country, and, unwilling to return to the cold regions of their native land, established themselves in its fair plains, and revelled in the luxuries of its delicious climate.

Alaric died soon after his last attack upon Rome. His place of sepulture was singular, and worthy his greatness while living: the river Busentinus was diverted from its course, and the body of the warrior was interred in its bed; after which the waters were again suffered to flow in their channel over the grave of this great hero.

In less than half a century afterwards, Italy was again invaded by the Huns, under their king Attila, the fierce northern, whose boast it was that the grass never grew where his horse trod, and who prided himself in the appellation of "the scourge of God"—

"Quel Attila, che fu flagello in terra*."

* Dante's 'Inferno' (Canto 12). Gibbon notices the remarkable fact, that the barbarian who made this boast, "undesignedly laid the foundations of a republic, which revived, in the feudal state of Europe, the art and spirit of commercial industry." Many of the fugitives from the towns he pillaged

He entered Italy at the northern extremity of the Adriatic, with an innumerable army, and laying waste with fire and sword all the cities in his route, advanced as far as Peschiera, a town at the southern extremity of the Lago di Garda. There he was met by Leo the Great, bishop of Rome*, whose eloquence and venerable appearance so excited the admiration of the barbarian, that he was deterred from his purpose of destroying the city, and Rome was saved without bloodshed.

It remained for Genseric, king of the Vandals, to complete the destruction of Rome : after yielding to his arms, the city was stripped of everything, the pillage continuing fourteen days†. This took place in 455, and from that time until A.D. 476 the world was mocked by the semblance of an empire, which in fact no longer existed. The

settled on the neighbouring islands, which the city of Venice now occupies—"like waterfowl, who fixed their nests on the bosom of the waves : " these were the founders of the Venetian republic.

* Some historians state that the interview took place at Ravenna : I have followed Gibbon and Balbi. This circumstance forms the subject of one of Rafael's frescos.

† Amongst the valuables which Genseric transported to Carthage, after the sacking of Rome, were the sacred vessels of the Jewish Temple, brought by Titus from Jerusalem. Belisarius, during his successful wars against the Vandals in Africa, retook them, and they were conveyed by order of Justinian to Jerusalem.

throne was occupied by weak princes, and its ruin was fast approaching. Augustulus, the last emperor, delivered his kingdom voluntarily into the hands of Odoacer, a barbarian, who assumed the title of King of Italy. Now had this unfortunate country fallen from its high estate, and exhibited an awful picture of the fate of human pride. Sunk in degradation and misery, governed by barbarians, stripped of her wealth and treasures, who could have recognised in the deserted and melancholy streets of Rome the proud conqueror of the earth? “The Niobe of nations” sat on her seven hills, mourning the loss of a world!

Under the wise and skilful government of Theodoric, the Ostrogoth, who, having conquered and killed Odoacer, caused himself to be proclaimed King of Italy, that country revived for a time. He was beloved by the Italians, as well as by his own subjects, for his impartial administration of justice; and the Goths during his reign became domesticated in Italy and advanced in civilization. But in recording the virtues of Theodoric, I must not omit to mention one deed which will for ever sully his fame,—the condemnation and death of Boethius, whose rank as a Roman senator, and still more his merits as a philosopher and scholar, should have entitled him at least to a fair and impartial hearing: but whilst, on a charge of conspiring against

the life of Theodoric, he was sent to a distant dungeon, the Senate by command of that monarch confiscated his property and sentenced him to death. The works of this philosopher remain a splendid exception to the ignorance which existed between the sixth and tenth centuries. He has been called the last of the ancients, and his 'Consolations of Philosophy' is ranked amongst the productions of classical literature : his works were the favourite study of Dante and all the Italian scholars and poets on the revival of letters.

Rome again became the scene of war and bloodshed in the time of Justinian, emperor of the East. Belisarius, his general, after having attacked and defeated the Vandals in Africa under Gelimer, entered Italy on the southern side. That country was torn by the dissensions of the successors of Theodoric, and Naples and Rome yielded without opposition to the arms of Belisarius in 536. The Goths, enraged at the loss of these cities, assembled at Ravenna, and, commanded by Vitiges, proceeded to Rome and besieged that city. But Belisarius was prepared for their attack ; having strengthened the town by the erection of new walls, and converted the Mausoleum of Adrian into a fortress, he succeeded in repulsing the enemy, and then marched to Ravenna, which surrendered, and the Gothic kingdom in Italy was overthrown.

This powerful and brave people, though suppressed for a time, arose again under Totila, and repossessed themselves of Rome. Belisarius, who had been ungratefully and cruelly disgraced by Justinian, was restored at this moment of danger to the command of the Cisalpine armies, and he succeeded in once more expelling the Goths from Rome. Narses, who succeeded Belisarius as general, entirely defeated them, and their king Totila was slain.

It is needless, as it is impossible, to follow the history of the barbarians further; suffice it to say that, after sixty years of contention and struggle, Italy was freed from the Goths, and placed (A.D. 554) under the government of the Exarchs of Ravenna, who were chosen by the emperors of the East. One nation alone maintained its position in Italy, and divided the power with the Empire—that of the Lombards, who occupied the territory to which they gave their name.

Rome had now become a place of small importance: it was no longer the seat of government; its palaces were deserted, its walls in ruins. Stripped and abandoned—its only inhabitants monks and barbarian soldiers—Rome would probably have been swept from the earth, but for the reverence with which it was regarded by Christians, as the scene of the martyrdom of St. Peter and St. Paul,

and many of the early professors of their religion. On this foundation, weak as it then seemed, was to arise the mighty fabric of Papal power, before which, as before the power of ancient Rome, all the world was to bow. "From the shipwreck of the Empire," says an old writer, "the Popes gathered planks to patch up that fabric which since they call St. Peter's barque."

Some polemical controversy between the Greek and Roman churches occasioned a schism. Although at the time of which I am now speaking the Popes or bishops of Rome were still subject to the Empire, they began to assume an independent power, both temporal and spiritual. As early as the end of the fifth century, Pope Symmachus is spoken of as "constituted judge in the place of God, which he filled as vicegerent of the Most High." The barbarians who had settled in Italy, and had been converted to Christianity, became firm adherents of the Romish Church; and while Mahometanism was rapidly gaining ground in the East, and the Caliphs spreading terror around them, Christians were glad to attach themselves to a church which was rising in temporal and spiritual power.

Gregory the Second, surnamed the Great, ascended the Papal throne in the year 590. He was universally beloved and looked up to by all the

bishops of Italy. During his life Rome being attacked by the Lombards, he asked protection and assistance from the French king Pepin, who, having conquered that nation, bestowed its territories on the Pope.

The Emperors of the East had aroused the indignation of the Popes and the Romish Church by the suppression of image-worship and of the adoration of relics. This superstition, which arose at first from a reverence for the dead, had grown into a fearful evil; priests and monks regularly trafficked in relics, and, by imputing miraculous powers to the images in certain churches, brought crowds of devotees and rich gifts to their altars. The emperor Leo (surnamed the Isaurian) and some of his successors, by venturing to oppose this abuse, had incurred the displeasure of the Roman pontiffs, who, to punish their contumacy, determined to revive the empire of the West, and bestowed the crown on Charlemagne, the illustrious son and successor of Pepin. He was crowned at Rome A.D. 800 by the Pope, under the title of Emperor of Rome, and governed Italy during a reign of forty years with wisdom and equity. This, which may be regarded as a bright epoch in the annals of Italy, was succeeded by one in which barbarism resumed its sway.

In 962, Otho king of Germany passed the Alps,

and, subduing the kingdom of Italy, claimed the imperial crown for his nation. Thenceforward the Emperor chosen by the German Diet became King of Italy and Rome ; but he could not assume the latter title until his election had been ratified and he had been crowned by the Pope. The Emperors were invested with the golden crown by the Pope at Rome, with the silver one of the German empire at Aix-la-Chapelle, and at Milan they assumed the iron crown of the kingdom of Lombardy, which was considered as the most sacred, being made, as was affirmed, of the nails with which our Saviour was crucified. The Emperor of Austria is still crowned with this on his accession to the throne : it is preserved in the cathedral at Monza.

Jealousies inevitably arose between the Emperors and Popes ; the former asserted their right to the supreme sovereignty of Italy, and even to the nomination to the Papal throne, without any interference of the councils of the Church. This was resisted by the Popes, who aspired to increase of temporal as well as spiritual dominion. In these struggles for power we may trace the origin of the feuds which for centuries laid waste the fair provinces of Italy, when the Papal and Imperial factions, under the names of Guelphs and Ghibelines, contended for supremacy.

The state of the Latin Church at this period was

a scandal to Christendom. Ecclesiastics of every rank were notorious for their profligacy, ignorance and rapacity: the Papal chair was exposed for sale, and purchased by the highest bidder.

In 1073, after so many years of corruption and debasement in the Church, there arose a man who was born to regenerate it; by him its power was based on so firm a foundation, that in vain in after times the other potentates of Europe strove to resist it. Hildebrand, known as Pope by the name of Gregory the Seventh, was born in the early part of the eleventh century. His penetration discerned the danger from within as well as without, and applied a vigorous and daring remedy. He reformed the abuses of the Church, and punished with severity all attempts to infringe the laws he imposed on the clergy: simony was suppressed, and the celibacy of the priesthood rigidly enforced. He openly defied the Emperor, causing the election of the Popes to be vested in the consistory of Cardinals; and when Henry the Fourth, who at that time occupied the imperial throne, resisted this, Gregory boldly excommunicated him, "binding him body and soul, taking prosperity from his life and victory from his arms," commanding all persons to abstain from intercourse with him, and freeing his subjects from their allegiance. Asserting the supremacy of priestly authority, he bade

the proud Emperor bow before the vicegerent of Heaven: Henry yielded, and, to obtain forgiveness, humbly sent his crown to the haughty pontiff, who, unsatisfied with this, commanded him as a penance to stand three days and nights barefoot in the snow before his castle.

From this time the world was subjugated to Papal authority; all Europe hung in breathless anxiety on the decrees of the Vatican, and trembled when its thunders were heard; excommunication was dreaded as the greatest evil, and to avoid it princes and emperors bent in lowly submission before the arrogant pontiffs. If the period preceding the appearance of Gregory the Seventh was marked by ignorance and profligacy, that which succeeded may be considered as the age of spiritual despotism; and this continued until its power was broken by Luther.

Rome was again raising her head as the metropolis of the world. The darkness which had veiled for a time the spirit of all that was true and beautiful was beginning to disperse, though as yet the light but faintly illumined the horizon. The Crusades, the first of which took place early in the twelfth century, powerfully assisted in the recivilization of mankind. I can only advert to the important benefits which resulted to Europe from this renewed opening of communication with the

East. It generated the spirit of chivalry which tempered the barbarous spirit of the age, and gave birth to commerce, which brought unbounded wealth to Europe and her merchant-princes.

With this return of intelligence there arose too a love of liberty; and in 1140, a daring monk, Arnold of Brescia, ventured to attack the political as well as religious abuses of the times. He was of course denounced by the Pope, Innocent the Second, and by him burnt alive. But the spirit of freedom he had died to awaken lived after him, and burst forth again and again.

In 1309 the Papal court was removed to Avignon. This step, so fatal to Rome, was the act of Clement the Fifth, a Frenchman. The Romans were loud in their complaints; and in the absence of their head, the nobles broke into open war. Divided into factions, they struggled for superiority, —the Colonna family opposing the Orsini, the Frangipani the Savelli. At this moment Rienzi stepped forward; eager amidst these scenes of contention to assert the rights of the people, he boldly claimed for his fellow-citizens a voice in the government; he rebuked the nobles for their pride and oppression of the poor, and endeavoured to rekindle the ancient love of liberty. But in vain: they were degenerate sons of Rome; and Rienzi, after acquiring immense power and influence over

the people, fell a victim to the vacillating spirit of the multitude. How far the motives of Rienzi were pure can scarcely be ascertained; he was naturally very ambitious, and few men could have withstood the temptations to personal aggrandizement which surrounded him. Many of his schemes were undoubtedly rash and impolitic; yet I cannot but think that there was in his heart a deep love of his country, and a firm resolve to free Rome from the tyranny of the nobles.

Petrarca lived at this period, whose reputation as a poet and a scholar claims our attention. He resided chiefly at Avignon, where, in spite of his high spirit of freedom and open profession of attachment to the liberties of his native land, he was patronized and beloved by the great.

It may appear at first sight singular that Petrarca should have founded his hopes of immortality on his Latin works, which are now little read; while the sonnets and canzoni he composed in his native language are still the delight and wonder of all. But the spirit of his age was very different from that of ours, and literary fame was sought in deep scholastic labours, and especially in the study of the Fathers of the Church. He was devoted also to classical pursuits, and urged forward with eagerness the search for ancient manuscripts which was so marked a feature of the four-

teenth century. But whilst the student venerates the name of Petrarca as a scholar, the world best knows him as the lover of Laura, whose beauty he has celebrated in three hundred sonnets, whom he loved without hope of return, and to whom even after her death he remained faithful: when living, he had loved her as a pure spirit, worshipping afar off,—and when removed by death, her memory was ever present to his thoughts. His style is pure and refined, and the Italian language, modelled by Dante, was perfected by him. He received in 1341 the greatest honour that could be conferred on him, that of being crowned at Rome in the Capitol.

I cannot however, in spite of the praise which is universally bestowed on Petrarca, grant him a place in my admiration beside Dante. Ugo Foscolo, in his *Essays on Petrarca*, beautifully contrasts these two poets. He speaks of Dante as the faithful historian of the manners of his age, the acute observer of character, the stern monitor of wrong, the fearless champion of right,—the poet not of one nation or of one sentiment, but of all nations and of every emotion of the human heart: whilst Petrarca, entirely absorbed by his passion for Laura, seeing everything through the medium of this one feeling, was selfish, and a prey to a morbid sensibility, which rendered him an indolent

spectator of the scenes of stirring interest which surrounded him. Listless and discontented he wandered from place to place; when in Avignon he pined for the solitude of Vaucluse, and when alone there he was still a miserable and restless being. In a curious conversation supposed to take place between St. Augustine and himself, in which the saint expostulates with him on his sins, and above all his passion for Laura, Petrarca says, "It is to Laura I owe what I am: never should I have obtained my present reputation and glory, if the sentiments with which she inspired me had not raised those seeds of virtue which nature had planted in my soul. She drew me from the snares and precipices into which the ardour of youth had plunged me; in fine she pointed out my road to heaven, and served me as a guide to pursue it." If to spend a life in melancholy repinings and indolent disquietude be virtue, then was Petrarca virtuous; but if, as I believe, it consists in the performance of duty, to the forgetfulness of self, even in spite of personal suffering, making all tend to the benefit of others, then must I think Petrarca deficient in the most admirable qualities of man. His sonnets are wonderful, his language pure and graceful, but the sentiments they contain are little calculated to benefit mankind. Professing to be an ardent lover of his country too,

he could quietly sit by when Rienzi was struggling for liberty, and "Rome was torn to pieces and all Italy disfigured." He says, "Others may contribute their strength, their riches, their power, or their counsel,—*I can offer nothing but tears!*" In one of his exquisite odes, he thus mourns the fallen state of his beloved Italy.

" Ah! is not this the soil my foot first press'd?
And here, in cradled rest,
Was I not softly hush'd? here fondly rear'd?
Ah! is not this my country?—so endear'd
By every filial tie,
In whose lap shrouded both my parents lie!
Oh! by this tender thought
Your torpid bosoms to compassion wrought,
Look on the people's grief,
Who, after God, of you expect relief;
And if ye but relent,
Virtue shall rouse her in embattled might
Against blind fury bent,
Nor long shall doubtful hang the unequal fight;
For no, the ancient flame
Is not extinguish'd yet, that raised the Italian name!*"

The vanity, too which Petrarca evinced on every occasion does not consist with a great mind; no one was more open to flattery, or more delighted by the notice of the great, than he was,—repaying it with fulsome, I had almost said servile, adulation. Nevertheless he maintained his liberty, re-

* Lady Dacre's translation.

jecting all the entreaties of Clement the Fifth to attach himself to the Papal court, preferring a life of solitude, devoted to study and melancholy contemplation. He died at Arquà near Padua in 1374, being found dead in his library, with one arm resting on a book which was open before him.

And now let me lay down my pen. We are entering on times of too much importance to be treated of here. If I have preferred wandering amid the dark ages, to dwelling on the brighter period of civilization, either in times of more remote antiquity, or in those of modern days, I have done so in the hope of giving you a clear idea of an important portion of history, which is peculiarly interesting from its connexion with the brightest period of Italian literature. In attempting this, I have found much to interest me deeply, and I hope that your patience may be rewarded by the acquisition of some knowledge, and the increased desire of gaining more.

LETTER IX.

Rome, December 9th.

A WEEK has passed since we reached Rome, and continually I feel the reality of its greatness growing upon my mind. In one of Goethe's letters, soon after his arrival here, is the following passage:—"I have now been here seven days, and gradually the general idea of this city becomes distinct in my mind. I go diligently backwards and forwards, I study the plans of ancient and modern Rome, contemplate the ruins, the buildings, visit now one palace now another, leisurely reviewing the great objects of interest. I open my eyes—I go, and come again; for in Rome only can one prepare oneself for Rome."

Our rambles today brought us to the Castle of Sant' Angelo, which stands at the far end of the Bridge of Sant' Angelo. This building, which has many interesting historical associations, was originally designed by the Emperor Adrian for his tomb, although its circular form and massive

structure are more fitted for its present use, as the citadel of Rome.

In one of the attacks made on Rome by the Goths, Belisarius defended himself in this castle, and employed the statues which decorated the interior in a manner little anticipated by the emperor by whom they were collected, hurling them on the heads of his assailants: it is grievous to think how many fine works of art have perished under the hands of barbarians, ignorant of their value, although Belisarius is scarcely to be ranked in their number. Since his time the Mausoleum has remained a fortified castle. It owes its present appellation to Gregory the Great, who, on his way to Saint Peter's, to offer up prayers for the deliverance of the city from a pestilence which devastated it, saw, as he crossed the bridge of Sant' Angelo, the Archangel Michael standing on the battlements of the castle, in the act of sheathing a sword. Accepting this as a token that the curse was averted, he named the fortress "Il Castello di Sant' Angelo," and a bronze figure of an angel still surmounts it. It is, I suppose, in further honour of this apparition, that the bridge has been studded with angels in every possible attitude. The upper rooms in the castle are used as prisons; and some of the brigands, who are now and then captured by a happy miracle, are allowed

to receive visits from the curious: we had no desire however to see these fettered terrors of their species.

It was during the siege of Rome, in 1527, when Clement the Seventh was taken prisoner by Charles the Fifth of Germany, that the Constable of Bourbon was killed in attacking this castle. Benvenuto Cellini, the famous artist, had the command of the artillery, and he boasted that this celebrated warrior fell by his hand: he was himself subsequently confined in its dungeons*.

At length we have seen St. Peter's. I was not prepared for the degree of admiration I felt on the approach to it: the noble colonnades which

* During this siege of Rome, Benvenuto Cellini, at the command of Pope Clement VII., melted down the gold of the Papal crown, and sewed the jewels into the Pope's dress. After the death of Clement, when Paul III. succeeded to the pontificate, Benvenuto was accused falsely by an old fellow-workman, with whom he had quarrelled, of having stolen a great number of the Papal jewels during the siege. The suspicion or the avarice of Paul was excited, and he caused Benvenuto to be arrested, offering to set him free if he would pay the money he had received for the jewels. But Benvenuto, conscious of his innocence, referred to the register of the Papal jewels; on searching which, there being no deficiency, the falsehood was detected. Nevertheless he was detained a prisoner, and Francis the First of France in vain endeavoured to procure his release: the Pope answered, that Benvenuto was so wild and untractable that he had confined him to prevent his doing mischief! But the truth was that the artist

sweep round the piazza are connected with long covered galleries, leading to the spacious vestibule from which the church is entered ; these colonnades are supported on gigantic pillars of Tiburtine stone, standing in a quadruple row. In the centre of the piazza is a lofty Egyptian obelisk, and on either side a beautiful fountain : a column of water, sent to an immense height, falls in showers of sparkling gems into a granite basin. We saw these fountains as the sun shone strongly on them, and the bright waters were radiant with a thousand hues—beautiful rainbows playing over them.

The façade of St. Peter's more resembles that of a palace than a church. We did not stay how-

had a mortal enemy in the son of the Pontiff, Pietro Ludovico, who poisoned his father's mind against him. He was confined in a dungeon in the castle of St. Angelo for a year, and treated with great cruelty, which was only relieved by the kindness of the Castellan. Once he effected his escape, by killing some of the guards and letting himself down from the castle-walls by means of sheets cut into slips. Wounded and hurt he took refuge in the palace of the Cardinal of Cornaro, who entreated Paul to release him ; but the Pope was greatly enraged, and ordered him back to his dungeon. During this time he imagined that he had repeated visions, one of which he modelled in wax for the Castellan. He also began a long poem on his imprisonment, but only one sonnet has been preserved. At last the Cardinal of Ferrara, supping one evening with the Pope, took advantage of the intoxication of his Holiness (in which we are told he used to indulge once a week), and gained his consent for the liberation of Benvenuto, who afterwards went to Paris.

ever at this time to examine the exterior, but eagerly raising the ponderous curtain which hangs before the door, we found ourselves at once within this mighty temple. Long did my eye wander from pillar to pillar, from statue to statue, from the floor to the ceiling, before I allowed myself to express the disappointment which I felt. Let no one go to St. Peter's with the expectation of being at once overwhelmed by its magnitude: every one feels on first entering it as I did, and every one is surprised as I am in afterwards remembering this first impression. In gradually examining the details of this noble edifice, astonishment takes the place of disappointment; the mind begins to comprehend its vastness, as a whole, and an indefinable sensation of wonder steals over it. Though in apparent magnitude it fell short of my expectations, in magnificence it far surpassed them. The rich and varied marbles which line the walls, the mosaic pavement, the side altars, the tomb of St. Peter, with its ever-burning lamps, the monuments—all contribute to the splendour of a scene which no imagination can picture.

We walked slowly up the centre aisle, until we stood beneath the Dome; then, sitting down on the steps of a confessional, we quietly gazed on its immensity. It is at this moment that the mind acknowledges all the power of Michael Angelo: the statues in the sacristy at Florence were for-

gotten, and I felt that here his greatness truly merits the praise of Ariosto*—

“ Michele più che mortale, Angelo divino ! ”

The high altar stands beneath the cupola, immediately over the tomb of St. Peter; a canopy of bronze called the Baldachino is erected above the altar, supported on twisted pillars of the same material, wreathed with garlands of gilt flowers. Near this is the statue of the saint himself, an object of great veneration to the Catholic world: few enter or quit the church without kissing and touching it with forehead and chin; the foot which receives all these pious salutations is happily encased in a sandal of bronze. It is a remarkable fact that this figure, which is now revered by the Catholic world as the representative of the head of the Christian Church, was originally a statue of Jupiter Capitolinus! It was transformed by one of the Popes into St. Peter, who now sits under a crimson canopy, with the keys of Heaven in his hand. Of this usurpation of the works of art and the rites of Paganism by the Romish Church I shall have to mention many instances—this one is peculiarly remarkable.

* One of the most beautiful monumental inscriptions—that to *our* great architect, Sir Christopher Wren, in St. Paul's—will recur to the reader's mind: “ Lector, si monumentum requiras, circumspice ! ”

In the north transept are confessionals for penitents from every land, and priests attend in them at appointed times. Many of the monuments are fine; I shall only mention one or two. That erected to the memory of Clement the Thirteenth is one of Canova's early works; the Pope is represented kneeling in his robes of state; on his left hand, an exquisite figure of the Genius of Life bends over his extinguished torch, in an attitude of profound grief; two lions seem to guard the entrance to the tomb, and a gigantic female figure of Religion stands on the right hand of the Pope—a formidable creature, and the only thing I wished away. Another beautiful monument by Thorwaldsen, the Danish sculptor, is erected to the memory of Pius the Seventh; one allegorical figure on it I greatly admired. Of the pictures in mosaic which ornament the altars I must speak at another time; in truth we have scarcely seen them yet, being so wearied with long-continued admiration that we were glad to change the scene.

December 11th.

ANXIOUS to have some more definite idea of the topography of Rome than our walks through the streets had afforded us, we drove to the Capitol, with the intention of ascending the tower attached to the palace of the Senator of Rome. The title

of Roman senator, as if in mockery of the dignity which once belonged to it, is still preserved, and borne by one man, a servile dependent of the Pope, elected by him and possessing no real power. We entered a large deserted hall, and soon began to mount by a dark winding staircase. Placed as it were between ancient and modern Rome, this tower commands one of the noblest views it is possible to conceive. We turned our eyes first to the city ; for, beautiful as modern Rome is, with her domes and palaces, it is to the ruins of her former glory that the mind reverts with the keenest interest.

Immediately beneath us was the Forum, strewn with fragments of temples and pillars : we looked down on the Arch of Severus, while those of Titus and Constantine rose beyond. Still further off stood the mighty Coliseum—the grandest monument amidst them all. In the far distance lay the desolate Campagna, with its scattered ruins ; the lofty aqueducts stretching across its plains, to the hills of classic fame which bound them,—the Alban mount, the Sabine hills, crowned with rich woods, among which lie concealed Tivoli, Tusculum, and Frascati, the favourite resort of Adrian, Horace, and Virgil. On the right, seemingly within our reach, was the Palace of the Cæsars, covering the

Palatine hill with a dark mass of ruins, and interesting only from its name.

I endeavoured to understand the situation of the seven hills on which Rome was built, but this is no easy task. We stood on the Capitol: the Palatine was on our right,—the Aventine, at the foot of which runs the Tiber, lying beyond. The Cœlian, less distinctly marked, rises near the church of San' Giovanni in Laterano, the cathedral of Rome; it may be distinguished by several melancholy-looking convents on its summit, and from its base spring the Aqueducts. On the Esquiline stands the fine church of Santa Maria Maggiore. The Viminal ought to come next in order, if it could be discovered; its site is known to have lain between the Esquiline and the Quirinal, the latter of which is crowned by the palace in which the Pope resides during the summer months, when the lower parts of the town become unhealthy from malaria. Two of these hills alone are now inhabited, the Esquiline and Quirinal; convents and wretched hovels only are thinly sprinkled over the others.

I knew not how to turn my eyes from their long and anxious gaze on this desolate yet beautiful scene. Everywhere the indications of past greatness, contrasted with present degradation—the

monuments of foreign conquests, surviving all trace of the power which achieved them, and standing as humiliating marks of the present feebleness of Roman power—fill the mind with melancholy reflections. In vain has man erected these temples and palaces, as if to treasure up in them his hopes of an immortality of earthly glory. “How art thou cut down to the ground which didst weaken nations! They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the city that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms? Strangers, the terrible of the nations, have cut thee off, and have left thee: upon the mountains and in all the valleys thy branches have fallen, and thy boughs are broken by all the rivers of the land; and all the people of the earth are gone down from thy shadow, and have left thee*.”

But leaving Pagan, let us turn to Papal Rome, the city which arose on the ruins of the Empire, the seat of a power scarcely less awful than its predecessor, though based on a different foundation. A strange revulsion of feeling was produced by merely casting our eyes around; I had been carried back two thousand years, and now in a moment my thoughts were recalled to what seemed

* Isaiah xiv. 12.—Ezekiel xxxi. 12.

a present time. "It is," observes Goethe, "a wearisome and melancholy task to separate ancient from modern Rome; we meet with traces of a glory and a desolation which both surpass our previous conceptions: what the barbarians left standing, the architects of modern Rome have laid waste." In another letter he says, "When we contemplate an existence which is two thousand years old and upwards, so manifest in its aspects through the various vicissitudes of time, and now changed so utterly, yet withal the same soil, the same hills, frequently the same columns and walls, and in the people still traces of the Roman character,—when we observe all this, we become as it were partners of the great decrees of fate, and we feel how difficult it is to understand, not merely how modern has succeeded ancient Rome, but also how the different epochs of modern and ancient Rome have succeeded each other."

The Piazza, which the tower of the Capitol overlooks, was erected by Michael Angelo. On one side is the Museum of the Capitol, on the other the Palazzo dei Conservatori; in the centre stands a bronze equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius; the horse is considered extremely fine, and it is said that Michael Angelo, after gazing intently on it, exclaimed "Cammina!"

Modern Rome now occupies what was formerly

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valuable works of art : from the Baths of Caracalla we have obtained the group known as the Toro, and the Farnese Hercules and Flora, so called from the noble family of that name by whom they were discovered : these are at Naples.

One of the finest halls in the Baths of Dioclesian, situated on the Quirinal, was converted by Michael Angelo into a noble church, called Santa Maria degli Angeli. It is in the form of a Greek cross, which always strikes me as having much more grandeur than the Latin one ; I admire the broad aisle, stretching unbroken by arch or column from altar to altar ; in this church its length is three hundred feet, and the pavement is of very beautiful mosaic. Salvator Rosa's tomb is here, and a fine fresco by Domenichino.

The church of San' Bernardo, rescued also from these Baths, is a rotunda, lighted like the Pantheon by a circular aperture in the centre of the cupola : it reminded us a little of that building, though much smaller. We endeavoured to gain admittance, but finding the door closed, we turned into a side-gate in search of some one to open it for us : this led to cloisters, from the further end of which a monk advanced to meet us, waving his hand, with a gentle "*Non si può entrare, Signore, non è permesso;*" and we found that we had intruded into a Benedictine monastery. These two churches,

with a large subterranean room, used as the Papal oil-cellar, are the only remains of Dioclesian's Baths. They were erected by that emperor at the time of his persecution of the Christians, thousands of whom were employed on them, and barbarously murdered at their completion.

Before we returned home today, we visited the Tomb of Cecilia Metella,—

“..... a stern round tower of other days,

Firm as a fortress, with its fence of stone

Such as an army's baffled strength delays,

Standing with half its battlements alone,

And with two thousand years of ivy grown,—

The garland of eternity.....

What was this tower of strength? within its cave

What treasure lay so lock'd, so hid?—a woman's grave.”

Nothing more is known of her for whom it was erected, than that she was the wife of Crassus, the opulent triumvir. The Gaetani family, during the civil wars of the Middle Ages, fortified themselves within this tower, and added the embattled cornice at the top; the walls are of immense thickness, and there was apparently no entrance until they were broken into, when a sarcophagus was found, which now stands in the court of the Farnese Palace.

There is something in this lonely monument so in accordance with the scene around that it fixes the attention. It stands at a considerable distance

from the city, in the midst of the Campagna ; the waving of the long grass, the hum of the passing insect, or the wind sweeping mournfully along, are the only sounds which fall upon the ear ; and the noble aqueducts, the scattered ruins of villages or tombs, with here and there a peasant tending his scanty flocks, are the only sights which meet the eye. All is still as the grave we look upon, and the vast Campagna, stretching everywhere around in melancholy grandeur, seems itself a mighty sepulchre.

LETTER XV.

Rome, January 12th.

I HAVE not yet found time to tell you of the Museum of the Capitol, although we have visited it often, and each time with increasing pleasure. The galleries contain many noble statues; that which charmed me most was the ‘Dying Gladiator.’ I never saw a statue which so forcibly and so instantly calls forth the sympathy of the beholder. It may seem strange to say that marble can thus stir the heart, but I have looked at this figure until it became almost too painful to bear.

“Bow’d low, and full of death, his head declines,
Yet o’er his brow indignant valour shines;
Calm in despair, in agony sedate,
His proud soul wrestles with o’ermastering fate;
That pang the conflict ends; he falls not yet—
Seems every nerve for one last effort set,
At once by Death, Death’s lingering power to brave:
He will not sink, but plunge into the grave—
Exhaust his mighty heart in one last sigh,
And rally life’s whole energy—to die! *”

* Cambridge Prize Poem by Mr. Chinnery.

There is a Faun here, in rosso-antico, by Praxiteles, eyeing a bunch of grapes with an expression of glee which is quite irresistible; and a Cupid bending his bow, by the same great master, that seemed to me the perfection of grace. A figure, called in the catalogue a preceptor of gymnastics—but apparently rather a philosopher instructing his pupils—is full of classic beauty; one hand is raised, as in admonition, and the whole figure is simple and dignified. Agrippina, the mother of Nero, supposed to be in the attitude in which she was found after hearing that her son had resolved upon her death, is very grand—the countenance noble and serene. A Venus in this Museum is the rival of the Medicean; but the room set apart for it is not generally open, and we have seen it but for a few moments. In a small room is the mosaic known by the name of ‘Pliny’s Doves,’ found in Adrian’s Villa at Tivoli; the design is beautiful,—doves drinking from a cup, on the edge of which they stand. Pliny is supposed to allude to them in the following passage, which has given rise to their present name: “There is at Pergamos a wonderful specimen of this art [of mosaic]; the subject is a dove drinking; its head casts a dark shade on the water. Other doves perched on the edge of the vessel are sunning and pluming themselves.”

The gallery of painting, known as that of the Capitol, forms the opposite side of the Piazza, and occupies a considerable part of the Palazzo dei Conservatori. It is a small but beautiful collection of pictures; among them are the Sibyls of Guercino and Domenichino.

We have been twice to the Stanze of Rafael, as the suite of apartments is called which contains his celebrated frescos; but many more visits will be necessary to give me any satisfactory idea of these wonderful paintings. They require a long and minute examination, singly and collectively. Not only must the subject be well understood, and the beauty of the design comprehended, but there are such exquisite groups—each in itself a study—that the mind becomes bewildered with an attempt to grasp the whole. The subjects are various, and may seem to a superficial observer unconnected; but Fuseli unites them all into one grand allegorical series, exemplifying the progress and universal reign of the Catholic religion, its establishment by divine authority, support by miracles, and final connexion with the Empire. In the first subject—the Parnassus—Poetry, traced back to its origin in the universal language of imagery, addresses the senses, and unites men, scattered and savage, in social and religious bands. Reason then asserts her influence; and in the School of Athens, Philo-

sophy ascends, from a mere moral and physical existence, to the belief in God, and glimpses of immortality are brought to man. Revelation confirms this, and conjecture becomes glorious reality; in the Dispute on the Sacrament, the Saviour is represented seated on his throne in the heavens, surrounded by apostles, prophets, patriarchs, and the angelic host; he institutes the sacraments and mysteries of religion, and the heads or Fathers of the Church, in this awful presence, explain and propound his doctrines. In the Miracle of Bolsena, the truth of one of these mysteries is enforced, and the doctrine of the real presence is proved by the consecrated wafer dropping blood at the prayer of the officiating priest—thus subduing doubt and heresy. The power of Heaven interposing to release its votaries and defeat its enemies, is illustrated by the deliverance of Peter from prison, the flagellation of Heliodorus for his attempt to profane the Temple, and the retreat of Attila from the gates of Rome. Nature too submits to the power of Religion, and the elements obey its mandates; a conflagration in the Borgo is checked by the Pontiff, who displays the Cross. Finally, in the miraculous conversion of Constantine, the defeat of his enemy Maxentius, and his baptism, the ultimate triumphs of Religion and its union with the State are proclaimed.

I have given this account of the Frescos of Ra-fael nearly in Fuseli's own words; and you will feel with me the grandeur of these works regarded thus as a perfect whole—the completion of a great idea carried through a succession of pictures. Studied as such, they are the production of a noble and philosophic mind. But there is another point in which they may be viewed: in all we trace a gentle spirit of sympathy, a heart moved with a feeling of man's infirmities; in almost every design is some group which arrests the eye and awakens our best emotions by some touch of genuine human feeling. Fuseli says—

“Not the miracle, but the fear and terrors of humanity, inspire and seize us at the conflagration of the Borgo; if in the Heliodorus the sublimity of the vision balances sympathy with astonishment, we follow the rapid ministers of grace to their revenge, less to rescue the Temple from the gripe of sacrilege, than inspired by the helpless innocence, the defenceless beauty, of the females and children around; while we forget Constantine and the angels in the battle, to share the agonies of the father, who recognizes his own son in the enemy he slew*.”

* For a more detailed account of these wonderful frescos, I would refer the reader to Kugler's admirable Hand-Book of Painting.

January 14th.

TODAY we had an order to see the subterranean church of St. Peter's, and we drove there from the Capitol. How this glorious temple grows upon the mind! We have penetrated to its vaults and mounted to its dome, we have visited its chapels and studied its monuments, and every step has but increased our admiration. "In this church," says Goethe, "I have learned to comprehend how Art as well as Nature can set aside every standard of measurement."

We descended to the Crypt by a small door, concealed behind the statue of Santa Veronica. Our guide carried a torch, or rather four huge wax-candles united, which shed but a feeble light through the darkness pervading these subterranean regions. In the gloomy arched passages through which we passed, were tombs of popes, princes and saints, before some of which small lamps were burning with a flickering light. In the little chapels opening from these, mass is occasionally performed, the effect of which must be very solemn. Ladies are only admitted on these occasions by an order from the Pope himself. In these vaults are preserved many relics of the former church of St. Peter's—curious old mosaics, bassi-rilievi, and frescos. Here rest the last members of the line of Stuart; their tomb bears the

names of James the Third, Charles the Third, and Henry the Ninth (Cardinal of York), kings of Great Britain and Ireland! A monument, executed by Canova, has been erected to them in the church.

Leaving the crypt, our next object was the Sacra Confessione, as the tomb of St. Peter is called. It lies much below the pavement, immediately under the dome, and is surrounded by a balustrade of white marble, on which a hundred lamps are always burning. The order we had obtained admitted us to descend to the gates of gilt bronze which enclose the sarcophagi of St. Peter and St. Paul: these are opened only once a year, on the festival of those saints. The space in which we stood is lined with various beautiful marbles; and lamps of solid silver, the gift of princes, hang before the tomb. A fine kneeling figure of Pius the Sixth, by Canova, is placed in front. That artist remonstrated eagerly against the bad taste of placing a statue of white marble amidst so much splendour, and, when compelled to do it, is said to have shed tears. In a chapel formed in one of the pilasters which support the church is a pillar of white marble, from the Temple of Jerusalem. Rafael, in his cartoon of the lame man healed at the beautiful gate of the Temple, must have copied this.

At last we ascended the Dome, and were well re-

warded for our fatigue, although the undertaking is a formidable one. The ascent is facilitated in every possible way, and is perfectly safe, firm and excellent staircases leading to the very top. A sort of winding road conducts to the roof of the nave, by which beasts of burden may reach the leads. On its vast space rise eighteen small domes, which give light to the chapels below, but are not visible when you look at the church from the Piazza. Besides these, are workshops for the people who are constantly employed in repairing the roof, and storehouses for the materials required; we saw a fire in one, and a fountain was playing near: the place had the appearance of a little town. The view into the Piazza from the platform, on which rise the gigantic statues in front of the church, is extremely fine.

We now mounted by a short flight of stairs to the first interior gallery of the Dome, and stood so near the mosaics representing the Evangelists that we could touch them. These, from the aisle below, have the appearance of finished paintings, but we found them mosaic-work of the coarsest description, each piece perhaps an inch square. The size of these figures may be imagined, when I tell you that the pen in the hand of St. Mark is six feet long, and the letters of the inscription which surrounds the Dome are three feet in height.

This inscription consists of the text on which the Popes found their claim to be the descendants of St. Peter—"Tu es Petrus, et super hunc petrum edificabo Ecclesiam meam, et tibi dabo claves regni cœlorum."

From the second gallery within the Dome we had a better conception of the grandeur and size of the church than from any other point. The spacious aisle beneath us seemed shortened to half its length, and yet the Dome still rose high above our heads. From this gallery we proceeded to the third, by passages and staircases, the narrowness of which and the form of the cupola obliged us to walk with our bodies bent sideways into a curve. Around this third gallery are windows, one of which was opened for us, and I looked down; but the height was awful, and with closed eyes and a giddy head I turned away. A few steps more brought us to the outside gallery, the highest point to which we proposed to climb; for we did not venture into the ball, seeing little to reward us for the exertion of mounting a perpendicular iron ladder of thirty steps, with an aperture of eighteen inches diameter to squeeze through at the top. It is true we could have *said* we had been in the ball of St. Peter's, but I covet little the glory of such achievements from which no pleasure is derived.

By degrees we took courage to look down on the glorious view. It was a day of cloudless beauty—the air soft and glowing. Certainly no city I have ever yet seen presents so beautiful a panorama as Rome. Viewed from this height, lying beneath the canopy of an Italian sky and bathed in an atmosphere of purple light, no words can tell its beauty. Beneath us were the domes and palaces of the modern city, while the ruins of ancient Rome rose in the distance; the windings of the Tiber seemed marked as by a silver thread, and in a long bright line on the edge of the horizon I recognized with delight the waters of the Mediterranean. We stood gazing long in silent admiration.

Leaving St. Peter's, we walked to see the manufactory of Mosaic. It differs from the Pietra-dura in this, that while stones are employed in the Florentine mosaic, the material used in the Roman is a composition of lead, tin, and glass, smelted and mixed with colours; of this there are said to be eighteen thousand shades. We walked through a long room lined with cases, in which this is arranged, to the workshops. Here we watched the process of the mosaic manufacture for some time. In an iron frame is placed a stone, the size of the intended picture; and on it is spread, inch by inch, a kind of mastic, which when dry becomes as hard as flint. While yet soft, the workman in-

serts in it the small pieces of which the mosaic is formed, cut and ground with the utmost nicety to the shape required. The time necessary for the completion of these pictures is of course great, and the expense proportionate, some costing nearly £5000.

When the copyist has faithfully executed his task, there is still much to be done ; the mosaic is laid on a table, and the interstices are filled with a peculiar sort of wax, prepared for this purpose ; the surface is then ground perfectly smooth, and the whole polished. The subjects generally chosen are the finest pictures of the old masters, and it is wonderful to see the beautiful copies produced by such mechanical means. Those which we saw in progress were an ' *Ecce homo* ' by Carlo Dolce, and a Sibyl by Domenichino. The famous fresco of Isaiah by Rafael, in the church of San Agostino, has just been copied in mosaic, and is about to be sent to Russia. The altar-pieces in St. Peter's, twenty-nine in number, are all mosaics except one, and vary much in excellence ; the ' *Transfiguration* ' for instance is a failure, but Guido's Archangel Michael is admirable : the original of the latter, in the church of the Capuchins here, is a glorious picture. The face and figure of the Archangel are radiant with beauty ; he is treading Satan beneath his feet, who is a personification of brute force :

the contrast is wonderful between the graceful and aërial form of the angel, and the herculean limbs of the prostrate fiend.

Before I close this letter, so much of which has been occupied with St. Peter's, I must say a word or two of its history. This mighty building was the work of many centuries. Eleven pontiffs successively filled the Papal chair from the time of its commencement to its completion, and ten different architects were engaged on it. Among them, as you know, was Michael Angelo, who at the advanced age of seventy-two was reluctantly persuaded by Paul the Third to undertake the direction of the building. The work had been carried on during forty years, and the skill of Bramante and Rafael had already been employed upon it. Michael Angelo had always expressed his admiration of the plan proposed by the former; but the exhausted coffers of the Papal treasury did not admit of the expenditure it would have required. The design of St. Gallo, his immediate predecessor, was set aside as too complicated, and the present more simple one was substituted.

In speaking of Buonarotti as an architect, Fuseli says: "The fabric of St. Peter's, scattered into an infinity of jarring parts, he concentrated, suspended the Cupola, and to the most complex gave the air of the most simple of edifices." It is recorded of Mi-

chael Angelo, that, when undertaking the completion of St. Peter's, he stipulated that he should receive no pecuniary recompense—wishing, as he said, to devote the labours of his last years to God. As the work advanced, the venerable architect became deeply interested, and continued his exertions with little intermission through the pontificates of Paul the Third, Julius the Third, Paul the Fourth, and Pius the Fourth, until death terminated his brilliant career. His great desire was to live until the work, to which he had devoted his last energies, should be so far completed as to prevent its being marred by his numerous enemies. This was granted: his life *was* prolonged, until he saw that Dome which he had declared he would “hang in air” perfected.

Let me conclude this long letter with a quaint description of St. Peter's which I met with today: the writer calls it “the quintessence of wit and wealth, strained into a religious design for making a handsome house for God to dwell in.”

Turn from me 15 p. 237

born in 1483. At an early age he gave proofs of his genius for painting; and his father Giovanni Santi, an artist of no small celebrity at that period, fostered in the young Rafael the love of art, and judiciously placed him under the care of Pietro Perugino. With him Rafael continued for many years, beloved by his master; and the friendship thus begun lasted through life; for Perugino had a mind superior to any mean jealousy of the talents of his pupil, which even in youth eclipsed his own; he rather gloried in him, and blessed God that he had been allowed to give the first impulse to such a spirit. At sixteen, Rafael was employed with Pinturicchio, another artist of the Perugian school, in painting the Library of the Duomo at Siena. In the figures he there executed, as well as in the other paintings which remain to us of this period, we trace much of the stiffness of Perugino's style. In 1504 Rafael visited Florence, and a new world of art at once opened on him: think what it must have been to such a mind to have had the works of Michael Angelo and Leonardo da Vinci presented to it; how must the ideal beauty, which had already visited his youthful mind in dreams, have then burst upon him, full, clear, defined!

From this time a sensible change may be observed in his works; to that love and perception

of the beautiful, that brilliancy of imagination, and above all that power of faithfully and vividly portraying the various expressions of the countenance excited by the emotions and passions of the heart, with which Nature had endowed him, Rafael now united the vigour and strength, the breadth and power, which he acquired from a careful study of the works of Michael Angelo and the other artists of the Florentine school, Masaccio, Leonardo da Vinci, and Fra Bartolommeo. From the latter, who was his friend, he gained many useful hints in colouring, whilst in return he instructed him in perspective. In 1508 he was invited to Rome by Julius the Second, who received him with marks of distinguished favour. His Holiness having commissioned him to paint a room in the Vatican in fresco, Rafael designed his famous ‘School of Athens,’ with which the Pope was so delighted that he ordered all the existing frescos to be effaced, and replaced by the great artist. In gratitude to his master, Rafael obtained permission that one painting by Pietro Perugino should be preserved. I shall speak to you again of these frescos when I have seen them.

Michael Angelo was employed at this period on the frescos in the Sistine Chapel; and it is a singular fact, that these two men, the greatest artists whom the world has ever produced, were at work

at the same time in the Vatican. It cannot be doubted that Rafael greatly invigorated and improved his style of painting by constant study of the works of Michael Angelo; nor does it detract in the smallest degree from the merit of the former as an artist, to acknowledge this. Rafael was no servile copyist; as Mr. Roscoe most justly observes,—“Rafael’s study was not *imitation* but *selection*. The works of Michael Angelo were to him a rich magazine; but he rejected as well as approved. The muscular forms, daring outline, and energetic attitudes of the Florentine artist were harmonized and softened in the elegant and graceful productions of the pencil of Rafael. It is thus that Homer was imitated by Virgil; and it is thus that genius always attracts and assimilates with itself whatever is excellent, either in the works of nature or the productions of art.”

Rafael always acknowledged himself deeply indebted to his great contemporary, and on his deathbed “thanked God that he had been born in the days of Michael Angelo.” But if the latter is unrivalled in strength and vigour of design, no one has ever equalled that grace and truth of expression which breathe through all the works of Rafael, of whom we may truly say—

“Il cor negli occhi e nella fronte ha scritto.”

It is common to hear these great men extolled at

the expense of one another ; each has violent partisans ; but I believe that those who have really appreciated their respective excellences, have found more cause to admire their works as viewed together, than through the medium of partial and injurious comparison. In the works of Rafael I find more that I can understand, more that appeals to my heart, than in those of Buonarotti, who in majesty of conception and sublimity of design stands pre-eminent*. An admirable critic on art has justly distinguished the peculiar merits of these great men : “ Michael Angelo,” he says, “ presents the knowledge of the general laws of nature,—Rafael, the fullness and life of the individual†.” It is indeed a noble thing to reflect on the different bent of genius exhibited in these two men : Art required this difference at this par-

* Hazlitt says of these two great masters—“ Michael Angelo possibly lost himself in the material and instrumental part of Art, in embodying a technical theory, or in acquiring the grammar of different branches of study, excelling in knowledge and in gravity of pretension ; whereas Rafael gave himself up to the diviner or lovelier impulse that breathes its soul over the face of things, being governed by a sense of reality and of general truth.....I should give the undoubted preference to Rafael, as at least the greater painter, if not the greater man, as I must ever prefer the finest face to the largest mask.”

† Rumohr. This is the old remark, better expressed, that Michael Angelo painted *man*, but Rafael *men*.

ticular period ; a new school was to be formed, and Nature lent to the great task the grandeur of Michael Angelo and the grace and feeling of Rafael : she united, harmonized, and moulded them into one.

Rafael, whose mind was attracted by everything great and beautiful, especially venerated the remains of ancient art : he had a great desire to restore Rome, and to reconstruct the buildings and temples, according to the ancient plan of the city. This occasioned the following epigram* :

“ How many heroes have built Rome,—during how long a period !
How many foes and how many centuries have destroyed it !
Rafael now seeks Rome in Rome, and finds it.
To seek it, was the gift of a great man,—to find it, that of a god.”

Vasari, in his eulogium on Rafael, speaks of the gentleness and kindness of his nature ; he says that all artists were subdued by his obliging manners and his surpassing merit ; but more than all by the spell of his natural character, which was so benevolent, so full of affectionate kindness, that not only men but even the very brutes loved him. He lived in perfect harmony with his brother artists ; it was as if all bad feelings were extinguished in his presence, every base and unworthy

* By Cœlio Calcagnini.

thought fled before him. He died at the early age of thirty-seven, with a mind still vigorous, and ever aspiring to greater excellence: to what perfection might he have attained, had his life been prolonged to the common age of man! The account of his death, and the effect it produced in Rome, are so beautifully told by Lanzi in his *History of Painting*, that I shall transcribe the passage for you.

“From the time of the completion of the ‘*Transfiguration*’ he never more touched the pencil. Being soon after seized with a fatal distemper, he expired with Christian resignation, at the age of thirty-seven, A.D. 1520. His last and greatest work was exposed to public view in the room where he used to paint, together with his mortal remains, previous to their interment in the Pantheon. There was not an artist but was moved to tears at this affecting sight, at one time casting their eyes on his youthful corpse, and on those hands which, in imitating nature’s works, had almost surpassed nature herself; at another, fixing them on that, his last performance, which seemed to them the first-fruits of a new and still more admirable style; nor could they help lamenting that, with the life of Rafael, the brightest prospects of Art were thus suddenly come to an end.”

The Pope was also deeply affected by his death,

and wrote thus to a friend,—“I cannot believe myself in Rome now that my poor Rafael is no more here.” At his command Cardinal Bembo wrote the epitaph which is inscribed on his tomb:

“Ille est hic Rafael, timuit quo sospite vinci
Rerum magna parens, et moriente mori*.”

The successors of “the divine Rafael,” like those of Michael Angelo, did little to forward the art. Giulio Pippi, called Romano, was his favourite pupil, and some of his pictures are much esteemed. To him Rafael entrusted the completion of many of his own designs; and we find frescos in the Farnesina, in the Villa Madama, and in various other places, which were the united production of master and pupil. After the death of Rafael, Giulio Romano was employed to finish the suite of rooms in which his master had displayed such wonderful skill: he and Penni, his fellow-student, completed the frescos in the Hall of Constantine. In the paintings of this the greatest disciple of Rafael, where we might have looked for more of the peculiar characteristics of his style, we find little that could lead us to suspect the master under whom he studied: nor, if we consider the reason of this, shall we be surprised,

* “Here is that Rafael, in whose life the great parent of things (Nature) feared to be surpassed,—in whose death, to die.”

since mere imitation could never produce such an artist ; the power must come from within, and cannot be acquired. Giulio has none of the grace and feeling of Rafael, and seems deficient in that ideal beauty which guided the pencil of his master ; but his drawings are marked by great energy and vigour of design. He painted generally in fresco, and his chief works, which are at Mantua, I have not seen ; in Rome he comes into too close a comparison with Rafael to be judged of fairly.

Michael Angelo Amerigo, usually called Caravaggio, for a time redeemed the Roman school from the mannerism into which it had fallen. He studied from nature ; and, although he often selected his models from vulgar subjects, yet he throws a powerful charm into his pictures by strong effects of light and shade. He is the painter perhaps the furthest removed from Rafael, for his pictures are devoid of all grace and refinement ; but there is a vigour and truth about his figures which inspires a certain degree of admiration. He was a man of fierce passions, and addicted to low vices ; and he often chose his subjects from life as he saw it, in its most degraded form : groups of gamblers, drunken revels, nocturnal brawls, murders, such were the scenes he loved to depict ; and when he touches sacred subjects, his figures are coarse and at times revolting, but true to the mo-

dels he adopted. His colouring was considered worthy of imitation by succeeding painters, and Annibale Caracci, in speaking of his flesh tints, said, "*Costui macinava carne**."

Gherardo delle Notti—so called from his subjects being mostly night-scenes—was likewise an artist of the Roman school: he is famous for the introduction of two lights, as moonlight and that from a lamp or candle, and reflecting them strongly on his figures:

The remaining artists of this school I shall only mention by name:—Pinturicchio, Andrea Sacchi, Pietro da Cortona, Barocci, Carlo Maratti, Giambattista Salvi (or Sassoferrato), Andrea Proccacini.

* That he ground flesh, rather than colours.

LETTER XI.

Rome, December 22nd.

THE weather since our arrival has been so cold as to make us forget that we are nearly ten degrees south of you Londoners ; the wind is really piercing, and the narrow streets admit so little sun, and are such inlets to gusts of wind, that we suffer more from cold here than we have often done in our own much-abused climate.

This day, the first which has been at all mild, we have devoted to the ruins of the ancient city, and have spent a delightful morning. We drove first to the Coliseum, which as yet we had seen only at a distance. What a noble ruin it is ! In no one part is the circle entirely broken through, and in some places the walls retain nearly their original height. Its magnitude strikes the observer at once, as he passes beneath the three rows of arches which surround its base, and enters

the arena; but, as at St. Peter's, the perception of its vastness increases the longer he gazes on it. "When we contemplate this object," says Goethe, "every other appears small. It is so vast, that the mind cannot retain the image of it; we remember it smaller than it is, and when we return to it its grandeur surprises us anew."

"Arches on arches! as it were that Rome,
Collecting the chief trophies of her line,
Would build up all her triumphs in one dome,
Her Coliseum stands. * * * *
A ruin—yet what ruin! from its mass
Walls, palaces, half-cities, have been rear'd;
Yet oft the enormous skeleton ye pass
And marvel where the spoil could have appear'd*."

We climbed by a flight of wooden stairs to the first and second tiers of seats, and followed the spacious corridors, until the broken arches beneath stopped our further progress; originally there were six of these corridors, rising one above another, but only four remain, and the upper one of these is inaccessible. In the lowest circle, called the Podium, seats were reserved for the emperor and his nobles. The three galleries above were occupied by the senators, the fifth by the people, and the sixth was set apart for the Roman women. The view from the highest point is very

* Childe Harold.

striking; we looked down on the grass-grown arena, and then on its circling arches, as they stood out against the clear blue sky, while streams of golden light fell through them on the crumbling walls and broken columns. The mighty city lay before us in its silent desolation; on one side, the arches of Nero's "Golden House,"—behind them, the dark ruins of the Baths of Titus, the Palace of the Cæsars with its long lines of tottering walls, and the arches of Titus and Constantine. There was something almost sublime in the scene; I stood lost in thought, picturing to myself this mighty building as it existed centuries ago, and peopling its walls with assembled multitudes. The scene seemed to transport me in thought back to the days when Rome was in all her greatness. But my eye was caught by the large black cross in the centre of the arena, at the foot of which knelt a peasant-girl and a mendicant friar: the dream vanished, and I turned to gather the wild-flowers which spring among the ruins.

The Flavian Amphitheatre, as this building was originally called, was erected by Vespasian and his son Titus, soon after their return from the conquest of Jerusalem. It is a singular fact, that to Vespasian, a man of avaricious disposition, Rome was indebted for the erection of this Am-

phitheatre and the Temple of Peace, the magnificence of which was almost unrivalled. The unfortunate Jews who had been brought captives to Rome were employed in the erection of the Coliseum, which was completed in four years. At the feasts given at its dedication, during the reign of Titus, it is said that five thousand wild beasts were slaughtered in the games. The form of the Amphitheatre is oval, and its size so stupendous, that it was capable of containing a hundred thousand spectators. The walls were encrusted with costly marbles, and enriched with ornaments of gold and amber. The network which enclosed the Podium, to protect those who sat there from the fury of the wild beasts, was of gold wire; an awning, sometimes of silk, was stretched across the immense building; the air was scented with oriental perfumes, and fountains sprinkled around their cool refreshing waters; everything in short that tended to luxury, or to the gratification of the senses, was collected here.

The games to which this Amphitheatre was appropriated were of the most cruel and sanguinary character. Combats of gladiators and wild beasts, which generally terminated in death, were frequent. Men were regularly trained for these games; some fought for hire, but these were few

in number, compared with the captives and slaves who were forcibly compelled to enter the lists*.

“ Haply to grace some Cæsar’s pageant pride,
The hero slave or hireling champion died ;
When Rome, degenerate Rome, for barbarous shows
Barter’d her virtue, glory and repose ;
Sold all that freemen prize as great and good,
For poms of death and theatres of blood.”

As vice and profligacy increased under the imperial sway, it was found necessary, in order to silence the clamours of the people, to feed their passion for amusements; every succeeding emperor invented new and exciting pleasures, and the giant tenants of the eastern deserts were brought into the amphitheatres. The blood-thirsty love of novelty was gratified by strange and unheard-of encounters; the harmless but unwieldly hippopotamus was opposed to the fury of the tiger, and the trembling deer fell an easy prey to the hyæna. The arena was sometimes filled with water, and a mimic warfare was carried on; these mock-fights were called Naumachia. But the fiercer sports of the Amphitheatre were more welcome to the people; and so great was their eager-

* Those who have witnessed the scenes—the remains of Rome’s greatness—described in ‘Childe Harold,’ will *feel* the power and truth of Byron’s descriptions. What a heart-thrilling picture has he drawn of the dying Gladiator! it is enough to recall it to the reader’s mind.

ness to witness them, that the Romans hastened there in crowds before daylight to secure seats. All pity, all feelings of humanity were lost in the excitement of the moment; even woman forgot her sex, to share the absorbing interest of these sanguinary sports. The signal for the commencement of the games was generally given by one of the Vestal Virgins, for whom seats were reserved in the Podium.

But enough of these cruel pastimes; they were one of the many causes which tended to the degradation of the Roman character. Constantine in vain endeavoured to suppress them, and the world was indebted for their abolition to Telemachus, a benevolent and courageous monk, who, regardless of danger, stepped into the arena to separate two gladiators. The people, infuriated at this interruption of their pleasure, overwhelmed him with a shower of stones; the Emperor Honorius interposed, but too late to save his life. This tragical event however led to the prohibition of the games, and Papal Rome soon after venerated Telemachus as a saint.

In the civil warfare which was carried on in Rome during the Middle Ages, this amphitheatre—which, in spite of the ravages of the barbarian armies, remained entire, though stripped of its marbles and precious ornaments—was converted

by some of the powerful nobles into a fortress. It was successively occupied by the Frangipani and Savelli families, and suffered much injury during that period. But it was yet more wantonly devoted to destruction by the Popes, many of whom, in their eagerness to enrich themselves and their families, cared little by what means their object was obtained. Paul the Third yielded an unwilling consent to the entreaty of his nephew Cardinal Farnese, to be allowed to supply himself with materials for a palace from the ruins. The permission to plunder was limited to the space of twelve hours; but the ruthless Cardinal turned four thousand men into the amphitheatre, and the work of devastation went on so rapidly that stones sufficient to build the Farnese Palace were obtained. It is not very creditable to Michael Angelo that he was its architect,—thus sanctioning the demolition of one of the noblest monuments of antiquity.

Other families share in the disgrace of despoiling the Coliseum,—amongst them the Barberini; and it was not until the middle of the last century that its destruction was arrested by Benedict the Fourteenth, who, regarding the spot as sanctified by the blood of the Christian martyrs that had perished there, consecrated it, and erected on the highest point of its walls a cross. This

now stands in the arena, around which are also placed at intervals fourteen small shrines, each containing a picture representing some traditional circumstance attending the progress of our Saviour to Golgotha. These shrines, which are called the "Via Crucis," are found in all Catholic countries, and are regarded with much veneration. I have often observed people passing from one to another, uttering a short prayer at each. To visit them is often imposed as a duty or a penance. One man alone, the *custode*, or keeper, inhabits the ruins during the day; at night a Papal guard patrols them: a capuchin friar is generally to be seen in the enclosure, with his box for "elemosine per le anime in purgatorio!" These, with the birds which make their nests amongst the crumbling fragments of the corridors, are now the only tenants of this mighty building. Truly, as Forsyth says, the Coliseum, "as it now stands, is a striking image of Rome itself: decayed, vacant, serious, yet grand—half grey and half green, erect on one side, and fallen on the other—with consecrated ground in its bosom, inhabited by a beadsman, visited by every caste; for moralists, antiquaries, painters, architects, devotees, all meet here, to meditate, to examine, to draw, to measure, and to pray*."

* It is related that Michael Angelo was found by Cardinal Farnese, when quite an old man, wandering among the ruins

Leaving the Coliseum, we walked to the arches of Titus and Constantine, in the Via Triumphalis, which leads through the Forum to the Capitol—that road along which the victorious warrior passed, amidst the shouts of the Roman populace, as he went to receive the laurel crown, the reward of his valour. The Arch of Titus, which was erected to his honour by the Senate after his conquest of Jerusalem, is covered with bassi-rilievi, now much injured, representing the emperor in his triumphal car, attended by captive Jews, and persons bearing the golden candlesticks, the tables of shew-bread, and other spoils of the Temple of Jerusalem. It is said that the Jews resident in Rome never pass under this arch, but go round it by a narrow path called the *Via degli Ebrei* (Street of the Jews). The Arch of Constantine was erected after the victory gained by him over the emperor Maxentius. Art was at that time at so low an ebb in Rome, that, in order to construct this arch, Trajan's was despoiled: it is amusing to see bassi-rilievi upon it representing battles with the Parthians, a people against whom Constantine never made war.

From these ruins we went to the Baths of Titus, where we found much to interest us. Nero's

of the Coliseum on a cold winter's day; and when asked why he thus exposed himself to the inclemency of the weather, he replied, "I am here to study architecture."

“Golden House” originally extended to this spot, but it was stripped by Titus of its ornaments, and became the foundation of his Baths. We entered by subterranean passages the long corridors erected by the latter emperor. These were blocked up until the time of Buonaparte, under whose short reign in Italy they were partly cleared. The ceilings of some are painted in arabesque, the colours of which are still very brilliant, although many have been destroyed by the damp, and it is to be feared that the rest will soon suffer the same fate. Rafael is said to have copied these arabesques in his designs for the Loggie of the Vatican; for the Baths of Titus have long been discovered, and it is only that portion which was Nero’s house that has lately been opened.

Let me say a word or two of *arabesques*. This term is supposed by some to have been derived from the Arabs, who, being forbidden by their religion to make any representations of men or animals, are said to have invented this species of painting, in which fanciful patterns of leaves, borders, wreaths, &c. were used, with small birds and insects, and creatures which are neither the likeness of anything on the earth nor under the earth. The Romans, bound by no such religious scruples, added figures of men and animals. At what period the arabesque style was introduced into Rome is

I believe not known, but it was probably in the early days of the Empire, when, as the East became tributary to Rome, a tide of luxury and wealth poured into the city, and its inhabitants sought in profuse ornaments, in gaudy colours, in gilding and mosaic, to compensate the want of true beauty in art, which was fast declining amongst them. I met with a passage quoted from Vitruvius, which proves that he regarded the use of arabesques as a mere innovation*. “On the ceilings,” he says, “are painted monsters, rather than the representations of real objects, having no meaning, with figures, some human, others resembling the heads of animals. These things never existed, nor can they or will they ever be created. Thus have new fashions controlled the powers of art, whilst from idleness bad artists have connived at the corruption.” In Benvenuto Cellini’s Life, I think, it is stated that the modern Italians have named this style *grottesca*, from the ancient specimens of it having been discovered in grottos or subterranean apartments; hence, I imagine, our word ‘grotesque,’ which admirably suits these paintings.

In these Baths we saw many spacious chambers, the walls covered with that stucco which seems

* He calls this species of painting, ornamental garden-work—“topiarium opus.”

to defy the assaults of time, and which the moderns vainly attempt to imitate; its colour is a beautiful red, and it is polished and hard as marble. Only thirty-six rooms have yet been excavated; and when we remember that it was here the 'Laocoon' was found, we feel an indescribable interest in the spot: what treasures may yet lie hidden under these masses of earth and stone!

Returning home, we stopped at the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, one of the largest in Rome. It is built on the site of a temple dedicated to Juno, and the spacious aisle of the Christian church retains the fine marble columns erected in honour of the goddess; they support a flat and heavy roof, which destroys the effect of this noble building. It was gilded with the first gold sent from the New World, which Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain presented to the see of Rome. Near the altar in each side-aisle is a splendid chapel, one of which, erected by the Borghese family, is magnificent beyond description. The marbles employed in it are a study; every colour seems to be harmoniously blended in them,—*verde antico*—*rosso antico*—*bianco* and *nero antico*—*diaspro sanguigno* and *radi celati* (or like hidden roots)—and *agate tartaruga*, or tortoiseshell agate—beside many others of rare beauty.

Addison, in his Letters from Italy, ranks the

marbles of Rome next to the statues,—an opinion in which I think few will agree with him. He states that many of the marbles used in the ancient temples are nowhere to be found except in Rome—"whether it be that the veins are undiscovered, or were quite exhausted upon the ancient buildings." Thus it is with rosso and verde antico, and many of the oriental alabasters and jaspers. But not only are the marbles themselves extinct, but the power of working many of them seems lost too; they resist the edge of all instruments now in use. When we look at the vast number of columns which yet remain of those that adorned ancient Rome, we can only wonder at the difficulties overcome, in cutting, polishing, and conveying them to the place destined for their reception.

In the centre of the altar in the Borghese chapel is the largest slab of lapis-lazuli I ever saw, set in an exquisite frame of jasper. Above this is a very precious relic,—a dark-coloured picture of the Virgin Mary, which tradition says was painted by St. Luke himself. Although no form or face is perceptible, it is held in great reverence, and beside it are hung many Papal Bulls which have been issued to establish its authenticity. This church possesses another treasure—half the cradle in which Jesus lay! We hear that it is carried

in grand state round the church early on Christmas morning, and left all that day on the high altar, for the inspection of the curious or the comfort of all true believers. We are looking forward to this great festival of the Catholic Church, and intend to be at St. Peter's early, to hear high mass performed by the Pope. Preparations have commenced in Santa Maria Maggiore; the beautiful pillars are already clothed in draperies of crimson damask and gold, and large chandeliers are suspended from them.

LETTER XII.

Rome, December 26th.

WE were in St. Peter's yesterday before eight o'clock, and were I think the first party that arrived. Congratulating ourselves on our good fortune in having the choice of places, we took our station on the railed seats set apart for the ladies near the high altar, which was separated from the rest of the church by a lofty screen covered with crimson cloth. Two thrones were erected within this inclosure for the Pope; one opposite to the altar, raised on steps, the other at the side. Around were the seats destined for the cardinals, foreign princes and ambassadors. We had just time to see all this, when a body of Swiss Guards, in their harlequin dresses of red, yellow and black, came towards the spot where we were sitting, and we were speedily made to understand, by gesture more than speech (for these Guards know scarcely a word of Italian), that we must quit our comfortable places. We obeyed reluctantly, and were thinking very disconsolately on the possibility of

standing two hours in a crowd of ladies now assembled round the entrance to the inclosure, when our servant came to tell us that he had spoken to a sacristan, who had promised to admit us into one of the small galleries, of which there are four beneath the dome. Nothing could be better than this situation ; here we were quietly seated, without any bustle, looking down on the expecting crowd of ladies, who were not admitted to their places until long afterwards. Permission being once granted them to enter, in they rushed, each struggling and pushing her way, in no very lady-like manner ; the guard, in vain attempting to moderate their eagerness, was completely overpowered by them. I felt ashamed, for they were most of them our countrywomen.

We had still an hour and a half to wait ; but there was so much to amuse and interest us in the novel scene, that time flew without our knowing it. Every moment offered something new and strange. Now a cardinal, with a long retinue of servants, crossed the aisle in his bright scarlet robes,—or returned, having exchanged them for a more sumptuous dress of white satin and gold. Now an ambassador, with his suite, was ushered through the crowd with all imaginable pomp. Here a priest, returning from a side altar, appeared from one of the arches, bearing the Host in his hand—

there, a group of peasants in their bright festal garments, or a solitary friar pacing slowly along the aisle. In a confessional opposite to us sat a Dominican friar, listening amidst all this gorgeous array to the tale of penitence which a woman was pouring into his ear. Presently the *Guarda Nobile* arrived; this is the body-guard of his Holiness, and consists of the sons of noble Roman families: their dress is splendid,—scarlet and silver, with graceful plumes of drooping feathers. They took their station near the altar, at the top of the avenue of soldiers, which now reached to the great western door.

At ten o'clock the cannon of Sant' Angelo announced the approach of the procession: the wide portals were thrown open, and from the far end of the noble aisle we saw it slowly advancing, at first like a moving mass of satin and feathers. By degrees however we discerned the figures of which it was composed: first came attendants, bearing on crimson velvet cushions the various Papal mitres and tiaras, the gold staff and cross, and the insignia of the temporal power of the Pope. Bishops and cardinals followed, each with his train of priests and servants. Two men next appeared, with large fans of white peacocks' feathers, immediately preceding the *Santo Padre*: these fans are carried before the Pope, and the eyes on the fea-

thers are considered emblematical of those of the whole human race, which are directed to him as the vicegerent of God on earth. His Holiness was seated in a chair of crimson and gold, borne on the shoulders of twelve men in sumptuous liveries; over his head floated a canopy of white satin, supported on lances carried by the *Palfrenieri*, as the persons selected for this office are called. He was dressed in magnificent robes of white satin embroidered with gold, and on his head was the triple crown: bestowing his benediction on the people, by making the sign of the cross in the air, he passed on to the high altar, where, descending from his aërial throne, he knelt for a minute at a splendid *Prie-Dieu*, and was then conducted to his chair of state.

At this moment the Mass began, the choristers chanting a glorious *Kyrie Eleison*. The cardinals each knelt in turn before the footstool of the Pope and kissed his hand; the bishops followed, and kneeling pressed their lips to his knee, while all their attendant priests saluted the cross embroidered on his slipper. Each, as he retired, bowed first to the Pope, as the representative of God on earth, and then to the right and left, as to the Son and Holy Ghost. Then the cardinals, receiving from the priests at the altar various parts of the Pope's dress, proceeded to divest him of his original robes.

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Ten were employed in this ceremony, who, stripping him of all his gay attire, left him sitting in a plain dress of white linen. I could not help smiling to see the grave old cardinals acting the part of valets, as they now unrobed, and again dressed up, their master like a puppet in satin and gold: at length the weighty task was accomplished and the Mass proceeded.

In speaking of some of the Catholic ceremonies he witnessed at Rome, Goethe says,—

“ A strange longing seized me that the head of the Church should open his golden lips and kindle us into rapture. When however I saw him before the altar, moving here and there, turning now to this side now to that, muttering and gesticulating like a common priest, there stirred within me the hereditary sin of Protestantism, and the well-known sacrifice of the Mass could by no means satisfy me. Even when a boy Christ taught through oral exposition of the Scriptures, and in his youth we may be sure he did not minister in silence; for, as we learn from the Gospel, he spoke willingly, with spirit and with power. What would he say, I thought, could he enter now, and witness his representative on earth muttering thus and shuffling about hither and thither? ”

I cannot follow the Mass through all the accompanying genuflections, the walking to and from the altar, the crowning and uncrowning of the Pope. Wearied out at last, I sat with my eyes closed, listening to the beautiful music; there was no organ, but the voices were rich and melodious, as they poured forth strains of delicious harmony.

At last the Pope arose, and supported by two cardinals approached the altar; clouds of incense ascended from the fuming censers as he elevated the Host. That was a moment never to be forgotten: the whole multitude was prostrate, every head was bent in adoration; the arms of the soldiers fell to the ground with a clanging sound, and a deathlike silence followed. I scarcely dared to breathe; when from the far end of the long aisle the full and silvery notes of a trumpet stole upon my ear, like sounds from heaven. Amidst assembled thousands the Pope alone was standing; three times he raised the cup, while a stream of glowing sunshine, falling on his uncovered head, seemed to light up the altar: then he replaced the chalice; the people rose, and loud hosannas resounded through the mighty dome. There was a power in the scene at that moment which even my heretic heart acknowledged; I forgot the weak emblem which was the object of adoration, and my thoughts rose to Him who is the sole fountain of life and light and all things.

Let me here say a few words on the music of the Catholic church. Hitherto I have heard little which has given me pleasure; the constant introduction of secular music into the service is offensive; in the midst of religious ceremonies, to hear the airs from Rossini's or Bellini's operas, or

noisy overtures of Auber, is so discordant with my feelings that I have often left the church in disgust. Widely different is the effect produced by the music which may be said properly to belong to the Church—I should say rather to the service of religion: for music is truly catholic in its spirit; and in my opinion it is delightful to reflect that, differing as men must do in matters of doctrine and belief, there is a power in this truly divine art which sets aside these differences and appeals to their common sentiments of devotion. It is interesting to observe the various forms under which this power is manifested in the different styles of ecclesiastical music—each according with the tone and spirit of the services to which it is adapted. But those composers who have really understood the powers of their art, and felt the true influences which it is capable of producing, have uniformly studied simplicity and grandeur. I confess that in the compositions of the modern school of church writers—in the masses even of Mozart and Haydn—these principles seem to me often lost sight of or disregarded. The florid style of these compositions (independent of their total disregard of rendering in music an expression of the sentiment of the words) is false in principle, and often offensive in execution. Those alone who have heard the sublime and massive harmonies of Palestrina, per-

formed as they are at Rome by the Papal choir, can feel all the influence which ecclesiastical music possesses over the mind. The Mass which we heard this morning was a noble specimen of the ancient Roman school of music; I was told (but whether on good authority I know not) that this was the famous work of Palestrina which saved music from being banished from the Church service. I could well believe that the divine harmonies we listened to this morning had produced such an effect. Do you remember a passage in reference to this subject in one of my father's lectures?

“The edict had been already prepared which was to banish music in parts, and to ordain no other employment of it than the Gregorian Chant. It was at this momentous crisis, when the doom of the art appeared to be sealed, that a young man, scarcely known but as a singer in the Pope's Chapel, dared to stand forth as the champion and representative of his art, and in its defence to appeal at once to the head of the Church. This man was Pierluigi da Palestrina. ‘Ere,’ said he, ‘you decree the extinction of an art which Heaven has allied to devotion, and before you silence that gift of the Almighty which he designed to elevate the soul of man, to inspire it with pure and holy thoughts, and to connect it with Himself, listen to its spirit, and hear *what* you are about to destroy. I will reveal it to you, for to me it has been already revealed.’ Such was Palestrina's appeal in behalf of his art, and if ever the soul of genius spoke it was then. I know of no such instance of that self-reliance which marks the highest order of intellect. Who besides Palestrina ever ventured to stake the very existence of an art upon the perilous issue of his own ability to reveal its power? His request was granted, and the pro-

mulgation of the decree suspended until he had completed his promised composition. Palestrina triumphed, and music was saved *. We can scarcely place ourselves in the situation of those who first heard this extraordinary effort of genius. The effect must have appeared like the birth of a new sense, and awakened emotions before unknown. The scientific hearer would be made to feel that the erudition which he had been accustomed to regard as the end of study, was but the means to a greater end ; and the consummate skill with which the arts of counterpoint were employed, would be absorbed in amazement and delight at the effects which they produced. And in this feeling we share. Time may have overspread the surface of the structure with a deeper and mellower tint, but its noble outline and its fair proportions are unchanged †."

Leaving St. Peter's, we drove to the church of Ara Cœli, on the Capitol. It is built on the site of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, and some of the ancient columns are still standing in the aisle. The long flight of steps which Julius Cæsar climbed on his knees, are now ascended in a similar posture by Catholics. Annexed to the church is a large convent of Franciscan friars, who possess a great treasure in a wooden *bambino* or image of the infant Saviour, to see which was the object of our visit. It is said that an angel flew down from Heaven, and ringing at the convent-door left this

* "La musica ecclesiastica pende dalla sua penna, e pende insieme la sua vita nel periglio della sua fama."—*Baini's Life of Palestrina*.

† Mr. Edward Taylor's (MS.) Lecture on the Vocal Harmony of the early Roman School.

image on the threshold, vanishing before any one appeared. It is in high repute as a physician, curing all diseases, and when summoned to the bedside of the sick, is conveyed in a coach by an attendant friar. Marvellous are the instances given of the miracles it has performed. This doll is displayed on Christmas-day in one of the chapels of the Ara Cœli, fitted up for the occasion with a scene and side-scenes representing an oriental landscape. In the foreground is a waxen figure of the Virgin, bending over a kind of basket filled with hay, which contains the bambino, dressed in swaddling-clothes of silver tissue.

In the afternoon we went to hear vespers at Santa Maria Maggiore. Cardinals attended, and the ceremony was called a fine one ; but the morning was too fresh in our remembrance, and leaving the gallery in which we had secured seats above the altar, we amused ourselves with the scene below. The church was brilliantly illuminated ; soldiers were stationed at intervals between the pillars, and crowds of gaily-dressed people were promenading up and down, talking and laughing, without the smallest reverence for the place : the scene looked like a splendid ball-room. After one or two turns in the crowded aisles, we returned, and thus ended our Christmas-day.

LETTER XIII.

Rome, December 30th.

I HAVE much to tell you of the churches of Rome ; but as I cannot describe all we have seen, I prefer to give you a general idea of them, and to mention a few of the curious legends which impart to some of these buildings an historical interest. Among them are the earliest temples for Christian worship, such as the church of San' Lorenzo fuori-Mura, which we visited this morning. It was erected by Constantine, and is a most singular edifice. Sant' Agnese, which, as well as San' Lorenzo, stands outside the walls of the city, is likewise a very curious old church, of the same period: this was one of the Basilicæ, ancient courts of justice, which were converted in the early ages of Christianity into churches. These retain their original form, the altar being erected under the arched roof, on the raised platform which was occupied by the judge and the tribunal.

This church, into which we descended by a long flight of marble steps, contains some beautiful antique columns ; but the most remarkable

thing is a statue beneath the altar, originally a Bacchus, but which now, invested with a drapery of oriental alabaster, is worshiped under the name of Sant' Agnese. Near this church is another, dedicated to Christian worship by Santa Costanza, the daughter of Constantine. It was previously a temple sacred to Bacchus, and the walls still retain frescos and mosaics representing processions in honour of that god*.

This mingling of Paganism and Catholicism, which we see everywhere, cannot fail to strike the mind of a stranger. I find my thoughts constantly carried back to the times of Heathenism, and it is not possible to avoid the conclusion that much of the complex and wonderful machinery of the Catholic religion must be traced rather to a Pagan than a Christian origin. However melancholy it is to see the pure and genuine spirit of Christianity polluted by a degrading alliance with Paganism, yet we must regard the establishment of the Catholic religion as one of those great means which Providence has permitted for wise purposes and for ultimate good. It was undoubtedly the design of the all-wise Creator that evil and good, truth

* In many instances the very names of the Pagan deities are retained :—Dr. Middleton mentions the church of Apollinaris, erected on the spot once sacred to Apollo ; that of Santa Martina, occupying the site of an ancient temple of Mars.

and superstition, should attend the progress of civilization and Christianity : but if we have faith in the final triumph of truth over error, we shall rather bring from the contemplation of past ages hope and confidence for the future, than discouragement and distrust. Let us believe firmly, even where we cannot see clearly, that the history of the world is but a display of the merciful though at times inscrutable ways of God, and confidently look to the time when the Gospel, in its simplicity and holiness, shall vindicate its hold on the hearts of men, and reason shall clear it from the encumbrances of superstition. "That with superstition, religion will pass away, seems to me," says Carlyle, "an ungrounded fear. Religion cannot pass away : the burning of a little straw may hide the stars of heaven, but the stars are still there and will re-appear."

Far therefore from professing, with Dr. Middleton (whose Letter from Rome has afforded me much valuable information), that "it is no part of my design in visiting Rome to attend to the absurd fictions or to take notice of the fopperies and ridiculous ceremonies of the present religion," I feel a strong and peculiar interest in them. To neglect them, would be to overlook a useful lesson, and to interrupt the chain of history at a very important point ; for periods of transition (as this,

from one religion to another) are really the most important in the history of mankind, since it is at these times that the powers and energies of the human mind are exerted and strained more than at any others : an impulse is then given, which continues to influence opinion and action imperceptibly long after the exciting cause has subsided. Thus it was at the time of the Reformation, and thus too when Paganism yielded to Christianity.

In so great a change as that which was effected by the introduction of a new religion, it could scarcely be expected that the faith in which a nation had been brought up for centuries should be suddenly and entirely superseded ; associations of long standing had endeared their own belief to the people, who clung even to acknowledged errors with reverential attachment. Christianity, in becoming the established religion of the state under Constantine, had many difficulties to contend with, not merely from its avowed enemies, but even from its friends. The transition from the superstitious rites of Paganism to the simple faith of Christianity could not be rapid : many of the ceremonies of the former were engrafted on the latter, in the hope of reconciling the public mind to its adoption. It was easier to substitute one image for another, than to lead at once to the spiritual worship of an unseen and hitherto unknown God.

The very symbols of the ancient religion were converted into emblems of the new faith. I met with the following curious list of these lately. "The vine and the genii sporting amongst its tendrils, and all the rites of Bacchus, were by the first Christians made symbolical of the vineyard of faith; the ear of corn employed in the rites of Ceres, became significant of the sacramental bread: the palm-branch, which amongst Heathens signified triumph over enemies, was by Christians made to signify the triumph of the Cross. Venus' dove became the Holy Ghost,—Diana's stag, the Christian soul thirsting for the living waters,—Juno's peacock, under the name of the phœnix, that soul after resurrection. One Evangelist was gifted with Jupiter's eagle, another with Cybele's lion; and winged genii and Cupids became angels and cherubs*."

The temples too of the Pagan deities changed only their objects of adoration; their altars still smoked with incense, and a thousand lamps shed their light on the shrines of saints, whose statues had superseded those of Heathen gods and goddesses. Ceremonial religion still reigned supreme in the Christian churches as in the Pagan temples: and Jupiter, Juno, Apollo, and a host of minor

* See Review of Hope's Essay on Architecture in the Architectural Magazine.

divinities, gave place in the hearts of men to the Deity, the Virgin, Jesus Christ, and all the saints of the calendar*.

Proofs of this are seen everywhere ; the most striking instance is perhaps the Pantheon. This beautiful temple was erected by Agrippa, the favourite of Augustus, who, when it was completed, desired to dedicate it to his master. The emperor however rejected the intended homage as impious ; and it was devoted, as its name denotes, to the worship of Jupiter and all the gods : by Boniface the Fourth it was consecrated to the Virgin and all the saints.

Near the Tiber is a small church, which was once a temple dedicated to Romulus, and built on the spot where he and his brother were supposed to have been suckled by the wolf. The Roman

* The author of *Rome Souveraine* thus speaks of Santa Maria Maggiore :—" Autel, idole, peintures, toute ici est païen. On prendrait la chaste Vierge entourée de ses anges pour Vénus au sein des amours. Aussi bien la ville papale, si païenne en tant de choses, n'a-t-elle rien de plus païen que Sainte Marie Majeure. Le maître-autel est une urne païenne ; les marbres, les granits, jusqu'aux porphyres où repose le berceau du Rédempteur, sont païens ; et cette colonnade aérienne, dont la grace svelte et la blancheur donnent au Sanctuaire son air de fête, elle est tout entière païenne. Consacrée à la mère de douleur, à la mère du Crucifié, elle l'était jadis à la divinité des mères et maîtresse du champ de bataille. Ainsi, là comme en tant de lieux d'Italie, les noms seuls ont changé."

women used to carry their sickly infants there, to place them under the protection of the king-deity, whose life as a child had been so miraculously preserved. When the temple was converted into a Christian church, this superstition appears to have been retained, for it was re-dedicated to some saint, who in infancy had been exposed to danger; and Christian mothers still continue to take their children to this shrine. A beautiful little temple of Vesta too has undergone a similar transformation: consecrated now to the Madonna del Sole, the Vestal Virgins are supplanted by the ‘Virgin of the Sun.’ In the Forum was another, dedicated to Romulus and Remus; it is now a church, devoted again to twin brothers, under the names of Cosimo and Damiano*. I could accumulate instances, but these must suffice.

* In this church is the following curious inscription:—
 “L’immagine di Maria Santissima che esiste all’ altare maggiore parlò a San Gregorio, Papa, dicendogli, ‘Perchè più non mi saluti mentre passando? eri solito salutarmi.’ Il Santo domandò perdono, e concesse a quelli che celebrano messa in quell’ altare la liberazione d’ una anima dal Purgatorio, cioè per quell’ anima per la quale si celebra la messa.”
 Or, in English, as follows: “The image of the most holy Virgin on the high altar spoke thus to Saint Gregory, Pope, saying, ‘Why do you not salute me as you pass? you were accustomed to salute me.’ The Saint asked pardon, and granted to those who should celebrate mass at this altar the liberation of a soul from purgatory—that is to say, of the soul for whom the mass is celebrated.”

A remarkable similarity exists between the various ceremonies of Pagan and Christian worship. The use of holy water, of lamps and incense, is common to both; the former being now sprinkled by the Priests, as it was of old by the Flamens, and the brush used in this rite is still called the *aspersorium*. The water too is prepared in the same manner, being mixed with salt; and Catholics now sprinkle themselves with it on entering their churches as Heathens were used to do. As lamps were once burning before the altars and statues of Heathen divinities, so we now see them before the images of saints. Catholics affirm that saints are merely the medium of prayer, intercessors with God; but this seems to me a self-delusion: for, turning to the prayers offered to them, we see the Virgin and saints addressed as the all-efficient and all-powerful dispensers of blessings, on whom the thoughts, the hopes of their votaries are centred. The one great and good Being, who claims our highest praise, appears to be forgotten; and the love and reverence due to the Creator alone are often given to the creature. I should say that the highest degree of worship is paid to Jesus Christ, and that the Virgin shares the rest with some favourite saint: her shrines are loaded with offerings, and in this again we recognise Paganism.

This practice is essentially heathen; and in the cabinets of antiquaries the *donaria* or votive offerings to Pagan deities may often be found. The shrines of the saints are covered with similar offerings: one instance will suffice. In the church of Sant' Agostino, which we visited a few days ago, there is a celebrated Madonna, famous for her miracles, whose aid is looked on as most efficacious in moments of danger, whether from sickness, accident by flood or fire, runaway horses, or falling ladders. This Madonna (a large and very ugly figure of marble—brown, nay almost black with age) bears in her arms an infant Christ; both are sumptuously dressed and crowned. Her robes are of white satin; on her arms are bracelets of gold, cameos, and precious stones; necklaces of equal value, with chains of massive gold, adorn her neck, and every finger is covered with beautiful rings; lamps of silver burn in a long row before her—each the gift of some devotee. That part of the church where she stands is hung with votive offerings, some of which amused us greatly; miniature legs, arms, hands and various parts of the body, in silver or wax—an innumerable quantity of small silver hearts—badly executed pictures, framed and glazed, representing wonderful escapes effected by the intervention of this Virgin. Some were droll enough; carriages overturned and la-

dies tumbling out, gently raised by the Madonna, who stoops down from heaven for the purpose ; or drowning men rescued by the same kind power. Besides these, all of which were intelligible, I saw a vast array of pistols, and of those large knives which the Romans always carry about them—the instruments of vengeance and secret assassination. I inquired the motive of these offerings, and was told that they were devoted to the Madonna by persons who had by her interposition been prevented committing murder. The number of these singular offerings is a startling proof alike of the revengeful spirit of the people and of their blind superstition. Cicero gives an amusing anecdote. “A friend of Diagoras, the atheist philosopher, finding him once in a temple, said to him, ‘You, who think the gods take no notice of human affairs, do not you see here, by this number of pictures, how many people for the sake of their vows have been saved in storms at sea, and got safe into harbour?’—‘Yes,’ said Diagoras, ‘I see how it is ; for those are never painted who happen to be drowned.’ ”

In the streets are shrines at almost every corner, generally to the Virgin, before which candles are always burning, and flowers often hung around them ; I saw a large cauliflower stuck beside one !

The following may be taken as a specimen of the inscriptions :

“ Fermati, passagier !
Il capo inchina
Alla Madre di Dio,
Del Ciel la Regina*.”

Before Christmas, my curiosity had been greatly excited by a scaffolding covered with canvas placed on the Doria Palace : on New-Year's day it was uncovered, and displayed a new shrine,—a Madonna set in a fine gilt frame, with a stucco glory round her head. Before night there was a bright new silver heart hanging beside her.

The veneration of relics appears to me more painful than any part of Catholicism : Rome abounds in these. We went on Friday to the church of San' Giovanni in Laterano, a great depository of them. This is the cathedral of Rome ; the Popes on their election go in solemn state to take possession of it ; we saw the curious old chair of stone on which they are seated on the occasion. In the cloisters are many extraordinary relics, brought from the Holy Land by Helena, the mother of Constantine, to whom the Catholics are largely indebted for her exertions in searching for and conveying to Rome these precious curiosities. Here

* “ Stop, passenger ! Bow thy head to the Mother of God, to the Queen of Heaven.”

are two columns of the Temple of Jerusalem, said to have been rent in twain at the time of the Crucifixion—the table of the Last Supper, which is so small that not more than three or four persons could possibly sit round it—a vial, said to contain some drops of the blood of our Saviour,—another, with some of the water which flowed from the wound in his side—a small piece of the sponge on which the vinegar was given to him—a lock of the Virgin's hair, and a piece of her petticoat ! Here too, I was told, is the very porphyry pillar on which the cock stood when he crowed, after Peter's denial of his master ; and, more than all, the towels with which the angels wiped the face of San' Lorenzo when he was broiling on the grid-iron. It is impossible to resist smiling at these absurdities ; but what a feeling of sadness does it impart, to think that people can be found to regard them as objects of religious homage !

Near this church is a small chapel, which contains a shrine said to be more holy than any in the world. The faithful mount to it by the very staircase which stood in the house of Pontius Pilate, and which Jesus ascended when he went to the judgement-hall : it is called the Santa Scala, and no foot is ever allowed to touch it—all persons ascending on their knees, repeating an Ave or a Paternoster at each step. We have seen it crowded

with people of all ranks, and the concourse of pilgrims to this shrine is so great, that the stairs have been cased with wood to prevent their being worn away. There are staircases parallel with the holy one, by which the devotees descend, and by which we ascended. I saw nothing when we reached the shrine, but I believe it contains another of Saint Luke's paintings.

This Santa Scala was one of the fruits of the pilgrimage made by Helena to the Holy Land, who for all her pious deeds was canonized. It was she who is said to have discovered the true Cross, which had been buried for three centuries. The story goes, that with it she found those of the two thieves crucified with our Saviour; and, puzzled to know which was the real object of her search, she caused a sick man to be placed on each in turn without success; until, as he touched the true cross, his malady was cured. Who after this miracle could doubt? Helena returned with her prize, a piece of which is kept in Saint Peter's, and exposed with other relics during the holy week: another portion is preserved in a church called the Santa Croce di Gerusalemme.

The San' Sudario, which I have before mentioned to you, is a relic also shown at Easter. Tradition declares it to be a handkerchief which was presented to our Saviour while bearing his cross,

by a woman named Veronica, and which, after he had wiped his face with it, retained the impression of his features. This saint, like many others, seems to have been a mere fiction of the Church; her name was probably derived, as Dr. Middleton observes, from *vera icon* (true image), and applied to the handkerchief*. Dante alludes to this in a beautiful passage of the *Divina Commedia*; whilst gazing on the form of Beatrice, he says,—

“ Quale è colui che forse di Croazia
Viene a veder la Veronica nostra,
Che per l’ antica fama non si sazia,
Ma dice nel pensier fin che si mostra,
Signor mio Gesù Cristo, Dio verace,
Or fu sì fatta la sembianza vostra ?
Tale era io mirando la vivace
Carità di colui che ’n questo mondo,
Contemplando, gustò di quella pace†.”

Here the poet evidently speaks, not of the Santa Veronica, but of the handkerchief or Vera Icon.

Whilst speaking of relics, I must tell you of an

* Dr. Middleton quotes this opinion of Mabillon.

† “ Like a wight
Who haply from Croatia wends to see
Our Veronica, and, the while ’t is shown,
Hangs over it with never-sated gaze,
And, all that he hath heard revolving, saith
Unto himself in thought, ‘ And didst thou
E’en thus, O Jesus, my true Lord and God ?
And was this semblance thine ?’ So gazed I then
Adoring.”

(*Il Paradiso*, Canto 31, *Cary’s Translation*.)

inestimable treasure contained in the small church of Santa Prassede—the very pillar to which Jesus was fastened when scourged ; it is of oriental jasper, about three feet high, and kept in a glass case in a small chapel, too sacred for women to enter ; men are allowed a nearer approach, but we were obliged to remain at a respectful distance, looking through an iron grate.

As a Protestant, it is impossible but that the rites and ceremonies of the Roman Catholic church should appear to me superstitious ; but let me not be understood to impugn the conduct, or question the piety of such as adopt and practise them with sincerity. I have no right—certainly I have no wish, to do either,—“One is our Master, even Christ.” Charity requires us to judge of those who differ from us in faith, not by *our* rule of right, but *theirs*—not according to the circumstances under which *we* have been educated, but rather to consider the influence of those in which *they* have been trained. Religion from the earliest times of Christianity has been presented to the people of Italy only under the form which it at present exhibits there—religion founded upon church authority, whose power has uniformly been shown through the medium of temporal greatness and invested with human grandeur. It is a religion which avowedly addresses itself to the feelings through outward ceremony, enlisting in its service,

as aids to this end, the power of art and the imposing pomp of worship. It appeals not to the reason, but to the feelings of the worshiper—differing in this important point from Protestantism, whose foundation was laid and whose support must be found in the assent of the reason to belief. But who shall sit in judgement, and condemn as mere gross idolatry the worship which to the conscience of his fellow-man appears the most acceptable to God? We believe firmly that Catholics are wrong in their opinions, or we should not be conscientious in the profession of our own; but let us always cherish the happy and Christian belief, that every one is judged in the counsels of our common Father by the light of his own conscience; and, whilst we may and ought honestly and fearlessly to avow our own opinions, and endeavour to make others see the reason of our faith, let us not forget that the highest testimony we can bring to their truth is a strict accordance with that blessed spirit of love and charity which unites us all as Christians. It is better for us to dwell upon the general and fundamental bonds of union, than seek to create dissension by harshly disputing the points of difference. “If a man seek truth and miss it,” says Carlyle, “is he not still our brother, and to be pitied? If a man do not seek truth, is he not our brother, and to be pitied still more?”

LETTER XIV.

Rome, January 6th.

OF the Palaces of Rome I scarcely know what to say ; one so much resembles another, that the same description may serve for all ; their chief, indeed their only attraction, lies in the pictures they contain. The exterior of these buildings is generally imposing : one suite of apartments is furnished with great magnificence, frequently hung with paintings and adorned with choice pieces of sculpture, whilst the rest of the palace is neglected and wears a deserted appearance. The entrance is often disagreeable ; you drive into a court-yard, and ascend a flight of marble stairs, at once magnificent and dirty ; you meet half-way up perhaps a miserable beggar, who supplicates your charity—a wretched contrast to the splendour around. When admitted, after ringing two or three times, you enter a lofty, spacious and very dirty hall : here a velvet canopy may overhang the chair of

state, and liveried servants indolently loiter about, seeming to have nothing better to do than to gaze at strangers; from this you turn to a cobbler's little stall or tailor's board, whilst a cardinal followed by a numerous train sweeps along the distant end of the hall. All this we saw in the Barberini Palace! Even the state-rooms of these palaces have a comfortless appearance; I never in any of them found a pleasant one, in which I could have sat down to write or read or work: all were gloomy and grand, with massive furniture—great couches and chairs, looking as hard as the marble of which the floors are formed.

The Borghese and Doria Palaces contain the most celebrated collections of paintings, but scattered through others are gems of exquisite beauty well worth the search. I do not attempt to describe pictures generally, but must mention two in the Colonna Palace, in which religion and art have been strangely compelled to minister to family pride. One represents the Last Judgement: angels are sounding their trumpets, the graves are yielding up their dead, and forth issue the members of the Colonna family, each with a small column rising from his shoulder—the heraldic symbol of their race! In the other a baby is sleeping in a cradle, watched by its mother, who, terrified by the approach of the Devil to steal her

child, prays to the Virgin for assistance ; and the latter kindly stoops down from heaven with a great club, and belabours the shoulders of his Satanic majesty until he is glad to slink away.

We spent a long morning in the Falconieri Palace, which is occupied by Cardinal Fesch*, the uncle of Buonaparte. A greater number of pictures of the Dutch and Flemish schools is to be found here than in any other gallery in Rome.

The Farnese Palace is famous for the frescos by the Caracci and Guido. The Farnesina is a small deserted-looking palace, standing in a court-yard overgrown with grass and weeds : it contains the ‘Galatea’ of Rafael, and other frescos finished by his pupils after his designs. The Corsini Palace has some fine pictures ; among them, a Virgin and Child by Murillo, and a Holy Family by Fra Bartolommeo principally caught my attention.

At the Ruspigliosi Palace, on the Quirinal, is the ‘Aurora’ of Guido, so justly celebrated ; it is painted in fresco upon the ceiling : how often, as I look at it with an aching neck, do I wish it anywhere else ! I cannot resist copying the following passage describing this beautiful fresco, which I met with today. “It is embodied poetry. The Hours, that hand in hand, encircling the car

* Since I wrote the above, Cardinal Fesch is dead : he expired at Rome.

of Phœbus, advance with rapid pace, resplendent in the hues of heaven, are of no mortal beauty; but they are eclipsed by Aurora herself, who sails on the golden clouds before them, shedding 'showers of shadowy roses' on the rejoicing earth; her celestial presence diffusing light, gladness, and beauty around. Above the heads of the heavenly coursers hovers the Morning-star, in the form of a cherub, bearing his flaming torch. Nothing is more admirable in this picture than the motion given to the whole: the smooth and rapid step of the circling Hours, as they tread the fleecy clouds—the fiery steeds—the whirling wheels of the car—the torch of Lucifer blown back by the velocity of his advance—and the form of Aurora borne through the air, till you almost fear she would float from your sight—all realize the illusion; you seem admitted into the world of fancy, and revel in its brightest creations*."

The Villas of Rome have disappointed me, notwithstanding their celebrity. We visited some for their gardens, but found them, generally speaking, formal and artificial, their only ornament being the graceful cypress and the dark pine with its tent-like head, those striking features in a Roman landscape. Many are famous for their water-works

* "Rome in the Nineteenth Century."

and fountains ; *jets-d'eau* and grottos, statues and terraces, meet the eye everywhere, until Nature is twisted into so many extraordinary forms that she scarcely seems to know herself; wonderful monsters spring up in ilexes or cypresses, and not a flower is to be seen except the beautiful wild ones, which in spite of art peep out, to remind us that, while art varies under the hand of man, nature is everywhere the same.

The only Villas worth a visit are the Borghese and the Albani. The first stands outside the walls of Rome, near the Porta del Popolo ; the pretty grounds which surround it are open to the public, and form the favourite drive and walk of the English. The villa itself is filled with fine statues and bassi-rilievi. In the Albani however is the choicest collection of ancient sculpture, scattered through many summer-houses and grottos, and ranged along wide open porticos. Amongst these statues are one of Jupiter grasping the thunder-bolt, and a Juno flying down to earth, her drapery floating in the wind. I remarked also an admirable figure of a Faun bearing an infant Bacchus on his shoulder.

One morning, soon after my arrival in Rome, I was awakened by a strange noise under my window, and on opening my shutters I saw two singular-looking figures, with a wind instrument

something like a bagpipe, which they were playing with much apparent satisfaction to themselves, though none to me. I found that they were Pifferari (pipers)—shepherds from the Abruzzi mountains, who come to Rome at this season to pay their annual homage to the Virgin mother on the birth of her son. This they offer at each of the little shrines niched in the streets, before one of which they had stopped, when I was disturbed by their discordant strains. These men wear long blue or brown cloaks, with conical hats, and their costume is very picturesque.

January 8th.

WE have this morning visited the Baths of Caracalla, an enormous and unshapely pile of ruins, the labyrinths of which we in vain endeavoured to understand. It was a festa day in Rome, and every one being gone into the city, our guide was a boy, who seemed to know as little about the ruins as we did. His only reply to our questions about some of the roofless chambers through which we were wandering, was, "*E' una stanza antica, antichissima!*" At last we gave up the attempt to gain any knowledge from him, and looked at them only as we should upon a fine picture. Standing far from modern Rome, they have in their soli-

tude an air of grandeur, which must be attributed rather to their vastness than to any architectural beauty. The walls are of red brick, mellowed to a fine rich hue by time, and are wreathed with festoons of ivy and creeping plants: the wall-flower and many a pretty weed spring from the crevices; the roof has entirely fallen in, and the clear deep blue sky seems to rest on the lofty walls above your head, while the mosaic pavements have given place to a carpet of soft turf.

The Baths of Rome are amongst the most extensive of its ruins, and give perhaps a greater idea of the luxurious and enervating manners of the age in which they were built than any other remains of the Imperial age. In those of which I now speak sixteen hundred persons found accommodation; spacious apartments, fitted up with oriental magnificence, were prepared for those who on quitting the baths required repose—libraries,—galleries of painting and sculpture—gymnasiums—porticos, under which orators, poets, and philosophers recited their poems or delivered orations—promenades, sheltered from the burning sun by fine trees. The halls were lined with marble, and refreshing fountains played around; in short everything was brought within the walls of the Baths that tended to luxury and ease. In these ruins have been found some of the most

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the Campus Martius, and contains but few ruins. The dome of the Pantheon may be distinguished amidst a nest of dirty houses : the Pillars of Trajan and Antonine, as well as the many obelisks, pierce through the mass of modern buildings which surround them. St. Peter's stands alone in majesty, amidst a crowd of smaller churches ; on one side, and rather disfiguring it, is the shapeless pile of the Vatican : the castle of Sant' Angelo is not far distant. Here too the view extends, beyond the city-walls, to the Campagna and the Apennines far north ; amongst them is seen Monte Oreste—the ancient Soracte, mentioned by Virgil and Horace—

“ Which from out the plain
Heaves like a long-swept wave about to break,
And on the curl hangs heavily.”

I have been trying since our return home to understand the causes which led to the overthrow of the city of Rome. Gibbon assigns four,—the injuries of time, and natural causes ; the ravages of the northern barbarians ; the use and abuse of the materials taken from its public buildings ; and the repeated civil wars and internal discord of the noble Roman families during the Middle Ages. If to these (sufficient in themselves to account for the destruction of the city) we add the influence of the elements, we shall cease to feel surprised at the

change in the appearance of the hills of Rome, the comparative mole-hill size of some, and the total disappearance of others.

The city has from time to time experienced much injury from the inundations of the Tiber: we hear of one soon after the first Punic war, and another in the time of Augustus, during which the river overflowed its banks so much that half the city was flooded. The valleys which intervened between the hills were gradually filled with the ruins of temples and houses that had fallen, and with the deposit of earth and mud left by the retiring waters. Fire was also a powerful agent in the work of destruction. The tower is still shown from which Nero is said to have viewed with fiendish delight the progress of the flames which he had himself kindled: out of fourteen districts, into which the city was divided, four only remained entire; the rest were left a mass of black and smoking ruins.

With respect to the devastation committed by the barbarians, many writers incline to believe it less than is generally imagined; and the conduct of Theodoric the Wise, king of the Goths, is adduced in proof of this assertion. But surely an argument cannot be based on one exception; and while Alaric, Attila, Genseric, and a host of others stand in array before us, we cannot exonerate these ruthless invaders from the sin of destroying

much that was valuable in art. It may be said that the motive which actuated them was rather a love of gain than of wanton destruction ; but the effect was the same, and equally to be deplored, since it left Rome a city of ruins.

Historians tell us also, that when the seat of empire was removed to Byzantium, the emperors caused many beautiful works of art in bronze and marble to be conveyed from Rome to their new capital ; and Rome was thus compelled to restore to Greece the treasures of which she had been deprived when subjugated by the Romans.

LETTER X.

Rome, December 18th.

SINCE I last wrote we have seen and done so much, that my pen must run fast to mention even half the palaces and churches we have visited. The Vatican stands first. It is open to strangers twice a week, and unfortunately the public days are the same for this gallery and that of the Capitol.

I had not formed the smallest idea of the Vatican, and was lost in amazement and delight as we entered gallery after gallery, hall after hall,

“Where Sculpture with her rainbow sister vies.”

I was dazzled by the extraordinary splendour of the building, the richness of the marbles, and bewildered by the beauty of the statues which stand in long lines on each side the corridors.

We entered the Museum by a gallery, the walls of which are covered with inscriptions taken from the Catacombs near Rome. At the end of this,

which to my impatience seemed interminable, are large iron gates: these were closed, and we had to wait until one o'clock, the appointed hour for opening them; it was but a few minutes, but they seemed to be hours, as we stood in eager expectation. At length we were admitted to the Chiaramonti Corridor, and turned into a gallery, added by Pius the Seventh, called the Nuovo Braccio. Here we found some very fine statues: a Minerva which I have never seen surpassed; a gigantic recumbent figure emblematical of the Nile, on whose huge limbs sported sixteen little children, typical of the degrees to which the river rises in its inundations; one little laughing cherub sat ensconced in a cornucopia, and the others were scattered in every graceful attitude of infantine play over the figure of the river-god*. A noble figure of a Grecian philosopher struck us too with admiration; but we soon returned to the Chiaramonti Corridor, intent on seeing the 'Apollo Belvedere,' and resolved that no object of attraction should detain us from it. In spite of our resolution, however, we stopped continually; now a bust of the youthful Augustus, now a female figure enveloped in graceful drapery, or a statue of Cupid

* There are at Lyons two similar emblematical figures of the Rhone and the Saone; the confluence of these rivers just below Lyons is locally termed "*le mariage*."

or a Juno, arrested us. At last we reached the Torso—a fragment of a colossal statue, of which merely the trunk remains ; it is considered a wonderful piece of sculpture, and was Michael Angelo's favourite study. I own that I can by no means rouse within myself the enthusiasm which is so generally expressed for this relic of ancient art ; although I can see why it is valuable to artists, and can imagine that there are few works more interesting to students. A figure of Meleager gave me far more pleasure.

But it was only as we stood before the Apollo that I felt all the magical power of this divine art. Words seem too faint to tell you of its perfection, its matchless grace and dignity ; it has opened a new world of beauty to me. It stands in a small room alone : at least I observed nothing else, and stood entranced before it.

Campbell, in his 'Life of Mrs. Siddons,' thus records her impressions and his own, when they visited the Louvre in company—at the time the French were in possession of this and other treasures of art from Italy—and first beheld this glorious statue.

"From the furthest end of that spacious room, the god seemed to look down like a president on the chosen assembly of sculptured forms, and appeared as if he had stepped freshly from the sun. I prize the recollected impressions of that day too dearly to call them fanciful ; they seemed to give my

mind a new sense of the harmony of Art,—a new visual power of enjoying Beauty. Every step of my approach to the presence of the god added to my sensations, and all recollections of his name in classic poetry swarmed on my mind as spontaneously as the associations that are conjured up by the sweetest music. * * * * Engrossed as I was by the Apollo, I could not forget the honour of being before him with so august a worshiper as Mrs. Siddons; and it certainly increased my enjoyment to see the first interview between the Paragon of Art and that of Nature. She was evidently much struck, but, like a true admirer, was not loquacious. I remember, however, that she said, ‘What a great idea it gives us of God, to think that he has created a human being capable of fashioning so divine a form!’”

This cabinet is one of four, placed at each angle of a court called ‘Il Belvedere,’ in the centre of which a fountain sends up its bright waters. A portico which surrounds the square connects these rooms, and contains large porphyry and polished granite baths, with marble sarcophagi, covered with bassi-rilievi found in ancient Rome; at another time they would have interested us—*now* they could not.

In the second of these small apartments is the celebrated group of the Laocoon. The figure of the father is wonderful, writhing beneath the coils of the monstrous serpent; the boys are secondary objects, the interest of the spectator being riveted upon the figure of Laocoon.

The subject of this group is taken from Virgil.

Laocoon, a priest of Neptune at Troy, was one day engaged in sacrificing, when two huge sea-serpents attacked his children. The scene is powerfully described by Virgil: Æneas says—

“ We fled amazed : their destined way they take,
And to Laocoon and his children make ;
And first around the tender boys they wind,
Then with their sharpen'd fangs their limbs and bodies grind.
The wretched father, running to their aid
With pious haste, but vain, they next invade ;
Twice round his waist their winding volumes roll'd,
And twice about his gasping throat they fold.
The priest thus doubly choked, their crests divide,
And towering o'er his head in triumph ride.
With both his hands he labours at the knots ;
His holy fillets the blue venom blots :
His roaring fills the flitting air around*.”

There is perhaps no work of art, of any age, which has excited more admiration or called forth more criticism than this famous group. Winkelmann, speaking of expression in works of art, quotes the Laocoon as an illustration. “The last and most eminent characteristic of the Greek works,” says he, “is a noble simplicity and sedate grandeur in gesture and expression. As the bottom of the sea lies peaceful beneath a foaming surface, a great soul lies sedate beneath the strife of passions in Greek figures. It is in the face of

* Æneid, ii. 264. (Dryden's Translation.)

Laocoon that this soul shines with full lustre—not confined, however, to the face—amidst the most violent sufferings. Pangs piercing every muscle, every labouring nerve,—pangs which we almost feel ourselves, whilst we contemplate, not the face nor the most expressive parts, but the body contracted by excruciating pains. These however exert not themselves with violence either in the face or gesture. He pierces not heaven, like the Laocoon of Virgil; his mouth is rather opened to discharge an anxious overloaded groan, as Sadolet says; the struggling body and the supporting mind exert themselves with equal strength, nay balance all the frame; we feel his pains, but wish for the hero's strength to support his misery."

In the third room stands a beautiful Antinous, or some say a Mercury—it is not known which; and in the fourth are the Perseus and the Boxers of Canova; these are the only modern statues in the Museum, and the former would be considered beautiful in any other gallery than that which holds the Apollo.

Through the 'Sala degli Animalì,' filled with figures of horses, birds, serpents and fishes, in various-coloured marbles, we passed on by the splendid Hall of the Muses to a circular room,

in the centre of which is a porphyry vase forty-two feet in diameter, discovered near the Porta del Popolo. It is surrounded by noble busts; one a head of Jupiter Tonans, others of Juno, Antinous, Minerva, &c. But as we reached this room, the hour for closing the Museum was arrived. The Pope was coming to take his accustomed walk through it; and the *custodi* (keepers), who looked like officers in uniform, and the Swiss Guard, quietly but peremptorily refused access to all who were pushing on to the rooms beyond.

On our second visit we penetrated further, and entered a magnificent hall, in the floor of which is inserted a beautiful mosaic, from the ruins of Adrian's Villa at Tivoli. Stairs of pure white marble lead to the galleries above: ascending these, with somewhat of the feeling with which one might wander through a fairy palace, we found on our right a small but exquisite room which increased the illusion. It is called 'La Stanza della Biga,' from a chariot drawn by two horses of white marble which occupies the centre of the room.

It was like enchantment to me—the marble walls, the mosaic floors, the magnificent vases, the glorious creations of genius which stood around me—there seemed no end to the treasures of the place. Another long gallery succeeded,

filled with smaller vases of oriental alabaster, candelabra, and lamps of exquisite form, and, more charming than all, statues of beautiful little children—one struggling with a swan as large as himself, another caressing a bird. This corridor leads to the Picture Gallery, which contains some of the choicest paintings in the world. The collection is not a large one, but every picture is a treasure of inestimable price; the last and finest work of Rafael, his 'Transfiguration,' is amongst them.

The chief excellence of this great master lies in expression, in the grace of his figures, and the truth and unity of his composition; his colouring has been found fault with, but to me it seems rich and harmonious. I knew little of Rafael as a painter until I came to Rome, but in his works I find all that I had conceived of the beautiful in art.

This picture is so well known by Morghen's excellent engraving*, that I need not describe it particularly: like many others of that age, it is divided into two parts; the upper represents the Transfiguration of our Saviour on Mount Tabor—in the lower are seen the Apostles, endeavouring to cure the demoniac boy. Every head is full of character—every face, every figure, a study. In those

* A very beautiful engraving has also been lately executed by M. Desnoyers.

of the women, who surround the boy, tender pity and anxious hope are depicted: one face there is of heavenly beauty—that of the mother I believe.

Goethe, in his remarks on this celebrated picture, severely blames those who censure its “double action.” His criticism is so just, so admirable, that I may quote it as the best description I can give of the subject of the picture.

“It is difficult to conceive how the unity of such a conception should ever have been impugned.....In the absence of the Saviour, a poor possessed boy is brought by his unhappy parents to the Disciples; they have made unsuccessful attempts to exorcise the spirit; a book has even been consulted, in order to inquire whether some traditionary formula might not be found effectual against the evil, but in vain. At this moment the only Powerful One appears in glory, and the Disciples eagerly point to Him as the only fountain of salvation. How then can the upper and lower portions of the picture be separated? United, they form a perfect whole; below, the sorrowing and necessitous,—above, the powerful and beneficent: each has a reference to the other. Rafael is distinguished for correctness of thought; and could a man so divinely gifted have falsely conceived, falsely executed such a subject? No—like Nature, he is always right, and often most profoundly so when we are the least able to comprehend him.”

In this Gallery too is a picture by Domenichino, a Bolognese artist, which is considered the rival of the ‘Transfiguration;’ it is beautiful in composition and colouring, but the subject is painful, representing the last moments of St. Jerome,

an infirm, emaciated old man receiving the communion from the hands of a priest.

Titian too has a noble picture here, possessing the attribute which characterizes the Venetian school, of gorgeous colouring, united to the grace and strength which were this artist's individual attributes. The subject is the Madonna enthroned in Heaven; the living, joyous child in her lap extends a crown to those below,—for here too is a “double action.” The figures beneath are martyrs and saints, amongst whom are a beautiful maiden, St. Catharine, with a palm-branch in her hand, and a noble figure of an old man gazing enraptured on high; angels hover around, bearing crowns and palm-branches, the emblems of martyrdom.

Rome, December 20th.

AFTER having spoken to you of some of the greatest works of Painting in Rome, let us give our attention for a few minutes to the Roman, as we have before done to the Florentine school. Each adopted the works of the ancients for their môdel—the former deriving from them elegance—the latter, strength.

Pietro Vanucci—more usually named Pietro Perugino, from his residence in Perugia—was to this

school what Masaccio was to that of Florence: in his style, though at times stiff and formal, we trace the first rudiments of that feeling of grace and tenderness that were afterwards the distinguishing characteristic of the artists who followed in his steps*. The beauty of his youthful heads especially is spoken of by all writers on Art in terms of the highest praise. While the Florentines were devoted to the study of form and design, Perugino was quietly working in the mountain city he had chosen as his residence, and preparing the way for the new æra in Art which was soon to open on the world, under his great pupil Rafael. Kugler classes Perugino in the school which he calls Umbrian, in speaking of which he makes an interesting and important remark:

“This region [Umbria, lying in the upper part of the valley of the Tiber] had distinguished itself in the middle ages above all Italy, as the peculiar seat of religious enthusiasm. Here were found the most miraculous pictures; here were

* Since my return to England, our National Gallery has been enriched by a beautiful specimen of Perugino's works, and two admirable paintings by Francia. The former is peculiarly interesting and instructive, as being apparently the model from which Rafael derived the type of his Madonnas. It possesses the same character and feeling,—that heavenly tenderness and beauty which Rafael studied, imitated, and made his own.

born and nurtured enthusiasts, like St. Francis ; and Assisi, with its Basilica, founded by this saint, naturally calculated as it was to foster such feelings, was the centre round which the other townships ranged themselves as tributaries. Art followed the current of life here, as it did in the commercial cities of Florence and Venice, as it did in Padua, where the study of classic lore predominated. Purity of soul, fervent unearthly longings, and an abandonment of the whole being to a pleasing-sad enthusiastic tenderness—these are the prevailing characteristics of the Umbrian school.”

It is melancholy to see a man of genius pursuing his vocation after age has benumbed his energies and robbed him of his powers ; it was thus with Perugino. When advanced in life he undertook to paint a picture for a church in Florence, which was so bad as to be judged unworthy the place it was intended to occupy. Humbled in spirit he returned to his native place, where, as his last work, in 1521, he completed a painting in fresco, begun by Rafael—thus in death uniting his name with the disciple of whom he was justly proud.

Here let me speak of an artist whose works are my delight. Francesco Francia ought perhaps to be classed amongst the masters of the Bolognese

school; but his paintings, in tone and character, bear such close affinity to those of Perugino, that he may more properly be placed beside him. The pictures of the latter master are known to have exercised great influence upon Francia, who was forty years of age before he began his career as a painter. His talents and the diligence with which he laboured in his art soon raised him to high distinction: the stiff and hard manner which is visible in his early works was abandoned; he imparted grace to his compositions and harmony to his colouring, while through all his works there breathes a tenderness, purity, and depth of feeling which have rarely been exceeded. "One of the most interesting events of Francia's life," says M. Rio, "was the poetical friendship which he contracted in his old age with the young Rafael, whom he had never seen, but whose appearance he hailed afar off, as that of a star whose brightness was soon to eclipse all others." It is interesting thus to place these great masters side by side, and trace the influence they exerted upon each other; thus we perceive the peculiar types of beauty, grace, and expression which Perugino first revealed, transferred from his mind to that of Francia, and behold them subsequently brought to perfection in the works of Rafael.

The great Rafael Santi (or Sanzio) d' Urbino was

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LETTER XVI.

Rome, January 18th.

WE have spent many hours of this beautiful day in wandering amongst the ruins of the Forum and in its vicinity. This spot appears to me to be hallowed by brighter associations than any other in Rome. The Coliseum brings back the remembrance of the time when, under imperial power, Rome was gradually sinking to decay, and most of her ruins are monuments of that period; but the Forum is connected with the days of her republican virtue and glory. I have seldom passed a more delightful hour, than when, seated on a broken column, I followed the train of thought which this spot awakened. Within sight of all that remains of the ancient Senate-house, the Palatine was on my right hand, where Romulus first marked the boundaries of the infant city; near me were the Capitol and the Tarpeian Rock, and around lay the fragments of temples.

Goethe makes the following admirable reflections in one of his letters from Italy: they may

not present themselves to the inattentive observer, but it is delightful to have our minds awakened to just and beautiful thoughts by the exercise of reflection in greater minds.

“The manner of studying works of art,” he says, “may be left to every individual. For myself, as I walk through this city, I enjoy the feeling, the idea, the perception of what in the highest sense may be termed the presence of classic ground. By this I mean the perception and recognition of greatness, as it has been, as it is, as it will be. It is in the nature of Time, and of all those elements physical and moral which act mutually upon one another, that the great and the glorious must pass away. But even the most general reflection seems to forbid our grieving as we wander amidst these ruins; we feel more inclined to rejoice, that so much is preserved and so much restored, even in more than its former glory and grandeur. The church of St. Peter’s is more greatly and boldly conceived than any temple of antiquity; and before us lay not only all that two thousand years had destroyed, but that also which a higher development of mind had been subsequently capable of producing. Even the fluctuations of taste—the striving after the simply grand, the return to the trivial and diversified—everything was indicative of movement and life: the history of man and of art lay outspread before us. It ought not to depress us when the conviction forces itself upon our minds that the Great is transient. The contemplation of past greatness should rather animate us to accomplish something of importance, which hereafter, even when in ruins, may stimulate our successors to a noble activity, in which our predecessors were never deficient.”

Beneath the Capitoline Hill are three columns, supposed to have belonged to the temple of Jupiter Tonans, erected by Augustus, in gratitude for

preservation from a thunderbolt, which fell on his chariot, killing the slave at his side. These, and the three pillars which are all that is now standing of the temple of Jupiter Stator, are considered to be amongst the finest specimens of the Corinthian order of architecture. Of the Temple of Concord nothing remains but six beautiful Ionic columns, which probably supported the portico. One solitary pillar, lately excavated, bears an inscription in honour of the emperor Phocas, and was erected by a slave. Near the Arch of Titus is a temple built by Antoninus, and dedicated to himself and his wife Faustina; it is much defaced by a modern church, standing in the centre of the portico. Further on rise three gigantic arches, which formed part of the roof of the temple which Vespasian dedicated to the goddess of Peace: after the termination of the Jewish war, the spoils taken from Jerusalem were deposited in this magnificent building.

A survey of the edifices of ancient and modern Rome cannot fail to excite a strong interest even in the mind of a casual observer—one ignorant of the rules of architecture—and naturally leads to a desire of becoming better acquainted with an art, whose rise is traced back to the earliest ages of the world, when the rude savage first made

a shelter for himself from the inclemencies of the weather, and the progress of which has gone hand in hand with that of civilization.

Advancing from the East, and transferred from one nation to another, architecture has adapted itself to the climate and the wants of each, assuming a character of grandeur, of profuse ornament, or of simplicity, according to the spirit of different countries. I cannot enter much into so extensive and diversified a subject; but while amidst the ruins of Rome, I would direct your attention to its history as connected with this city, and point out the changes which it underwent in different periods. Art and history thus lend an interest to one another; and in pursuing these and similar studies in connexion, in tracing their reciprocal influences, the historian opens the pages of past times to the investigation of the philosopher.

Although, in judging of architecture, a more intimate knowledge of scientific rules may be necessary than in other arts, yet the most ignorant must be conscious of an impression made upon their minds by the contemplation of a fine building; the eye is pleased and the mind satisfied, although the spectator may be unable to assign a reason for the pleasure he feels. Taking simplicity and truth as our guides, in this as in every-

thing else, we shall not err much in our judgement ; the former will teach us to admire the sublime, which is ever allied to simplicity, and to regard superfluous ornament as an encumbrance ; whilst the latter will lead us to perceive where that ornament springs naturally from the construction, where utility and beauty are happily and justly blended, and symmetry pervades the whole. “Architecture being the daughter of necessity, every beauty it possesses should connect itself with that necessity ; everything done for *mere* ornament is a defect—everything should be *true**.”

Madame de Stael, in her ‘Corinne,’ makes the following just and beautiful remark on the edifices of Rome. “Ils portent presque toujours une empreinte historique ; on y peut remarquer, pour ainsi dire, la physionomie des âges. Depuis les Etrusques, ces peuples plus anciens que les Romains mêmes, jusqu’à nos jours, on peut observer l’esprit humain à Rome, dans les différens caractères des arts, des édifices, et des ruines. Cette étude du passé, dans les objets présens à nos regards, nous fait pénétrer le génie des temps. Rome n’est pas simplement un assemblage d’habitations ; c’est l’histoire du monde, figurée par divers emblèmes, et représentée sous divers formes.” And

* Wood’s Letters on Architecture.

thus it is; we still trace in Rome the effect which each nation, as it was in turn subdued by her power, produced on the architecture and embellishments of the city; we see how, in the earliest period, the Romans began their system of imitation, and borrowed from the Etruscans the solid and simple style which marks the buildings of those times; and how in later ages, when Greece yielded to the republican armies, and the East became tributary to her imperial power, Rome was invested with Grecian beauty and Eastern magnificence.

Few buildings exist of the Regal period; the Cloaca Maxima and the foundations of the Capitol are nearly all that remain: in the former we may observe the simple study of utility and strength in architecture producing real grandeur. The Cloaca runs under the whole city, terminating in the Tiber, and seems originally to have been intended as a drain for the superfluous waters of that river in its frequent inundations. It is composed of immense blocks of stone, cut and placed together without cement; the height of the vaulted roof is sufficient to allow a wagon loaded with hay to drive through it. After a lapse of more than two thousand years the Cloaca Maxima remains, untouched, unimpaired by time!

The ruins of the buildings erected during the

Republic also are all marked by utility and solidity. The roads, which from Rome spread like arteries and veins to the remotest corners of the vast empire—the aqueducts, by which the city was profusely supplied with water, brought in copious streams from the distance of from ten to twenty miles, and conveyed on lofty arches across the Campagna from the Sabine hills—these and other monuments exist, characterizing in their massive forms and useful designs the age in which they were erected.

It was the boast of Augustus that he found Rome of brick and left it of marble; and certainly from his time the object of both emperors and subjects seems to have been, not to erect buildings of mere utility, but such as would adorn the city, and prove their own wealth and ostentatious love of show. But although the Romans imitated the Greeks, they never acquired that sense of classic beauty in art which the latter people possessed. It would be highly interesting to trace the causes which produced so entire a diversity of genius in these two nations of antiquity; but I will only here observe that, whilst the Greek taste was formed to a standard of simplicity, truth and beauty—the Romans evinced, in every departure they made from their Grecian models, an absence of all correct taste, and the constant adoption of false principles.

Until the time of Augustus, the Romans, content to follow in the footsteps of Greece, had in many instances produced noble edifices : of this date are the Pantheon and the temple of Jupiter Stator in the Forum : the latter is one of the most perfect specimens of Grecian architecture which Rome ever possessed.

The Grecian Orders were three in number :—the Doric, whose simple and dignified style was peculiarly adapted to buildings in which grandeur and solemnity were required :—the Ionic, which, though departing from the plain majesty of the Doric, acquired grace by the beautiful and simple volutes of the capitals ;—and the Corinthian, in which art seems to have attained its greatest perfection ; its lofty shaft, surmounted by a capital enriched with the graceful leaves of the acathus, acquired new elegance, without losing its character of strength. To these Italy added two ; the Tuscan, which in its simplicity resembled the Doric, though differing from it in some points ; and the Composite order, in which the Romans, exuberant in their love of ornament, united the volutes of the Ionic with the Corinthian capital, and by increasing the number of acanthus-leaves destroyed the simple elegance of the Grecian model. This order, I believe, was first employed in Rome in the Arch of Titus.

From the time of Augustus architecture degenerated; Caligula and Nero substituted, for a love of the beautiful, an idea more consonant with their gross minds, and made colossal size the standard of excellence: the "Golden House" of the latter no longer exists, but we have descriptions of it, which show that it extended over the Palatine and the whole valley between that hill and the Cœlian, and was more a town than a house, even for the emperor of Rome to dwell in.

Little improvement can be discerned from this time in the art; although under Trajan, Adrian, and the Antonines it rose into more estimation. Forums, baths, circuses, arches, temples, and amphitheatres, remain of these times, but few if any are considered to be in pure or good taste. I cannot enter into details of the corruptions which now crept into architecture. I neither understand them, nor would they be interesting to you were I to describe them; but one or two are so obvious as to strike the eye at once: columns are raised on pedestals of an unmeaning height; pilasters, which in Greece were used merely at the termination of a colonnade, or to form the square corner of a building, are in Rome often placed in rows against a wall: then the pediment, that beautiful sloping roof which surmounts the Grecian portico in an unbroken and noble triangle, is here multiplied

without end—sometimes introduced in rows, at others placed a small within a larger one—sometimes divided, and often rounded at the top, thus destroying its beauty and simple majesty.

One thing I must not neglect to observe : whilst the Greeks were sparing in the use of the arch, never making it an essential part of their designs, in Rome it appears to have been known and employed from the earliest period ; we see it in the Cloaca Maxima, and it is very probable that the Romans adopted it from Etruria. Mr. Hope well observes, “ Had they been possessed of a delicate appreciation of the beauties of art, and been gifted with inventive or imaginative genius, the curves and convexities of the arch would have afforded means of adding much variety and beauty to the straight lines, flat surfaces, and angular terminations of Greece.” But they were not even gifted with that taste which discriminates in the inventions of others, and their architectural combinations are generally marked by an absence of simplicity and truth.

Christianity found architecture in a lamentable state of degradation, of which the first temples of Christian worship, erected by Constantine and his successors, are sufficient proofs. I have told you already how Pagan were converted into Christian temples, and that many of the

courts of justice, or Basilicæ*, were similarly appropriated. When the seat of government was removed by Constantine to Byzantium, that city became the centre of attraction to artists of every description, and the style of architecture adopted there was imitated and transplanted to other parts of the empire.

After this period we trace in Rome a still greater decline in this art: the arch had been hitherto employed in its simple and single form alone; rows of small arches were now introduced, surmounting each other, and supported on grotesque and twisted pillars, serving no purpose but that of hiding the nakedness of the walls before which they were erected, and crowned with capitals of square blocks, loaded with ornaments of leaves, scrolls, and sometimes animals†. Costly materials were heaped together without taste or harmony, whilst truth, grandeur, and utility were lost sight of.

During the Middle Ages architecture assumed quite a new character: but as the changes which it now underwent would require more minute

* *Basilica* was a term originally applied to a royal abode, or to courts of justice. When Christianity was connected with the state, Constantine converted two of these buildings into churches. The name *Basilica* is still retained by many churches.

† As in San Lorenzo Fuori-le-Mura, where a lizard and crocodile are introduced in the capitals.

examination and criticism than I can here give, I must close my letter. This sketch of the architecture of Rome, brief as it is, may serve to show you what endless sources of interest and amusement this city unfolds, and may perhaps lead you to inquire further into a subject which will amply repay your investigation.

LETTER XVII.

Rome, January 22nd.

WE have long been waiting for a bright warm day, to explore the ancient city; this morning the weather was most propitious, and we sallied forth. Nothing can be sweeter than the first breathings of spring in this climate, or rather those bright and genial days which cheat us into a belief that spring is come.

The Palatine, to which we first directed our steps, is covered with the ruins of the Palace of the Cæsars. Antiquarians are puzzled in vain attempts to understand them, but the great interest to me is in the spot itself. These ruins—the monuments of a glory which has long passed away—seem to present to the mind an epitome of the power of man in its extent and limits. Long lines of broken walls, flights of grass-grown stairs, arched passages and winding galleries, are all that now remain of the dwellings of the emperors. Even the more modern buildings, erected by Michael Angelo in the Farnese Gardens, which lay on this

hill, are crumbling in the dust. Amongst these ruins have been discovered subterranean apartments, to which antiquaries have given the name of the Baths of Livia.

We descended to these by a steep and dilapidated staircase, and in a small room at the foot found some curious arabesque paintings in fresco on the ceiling. They are much injured by the smoke of torches, which the guide holds up to them, but among the figures distinctly visible I noticed a very graceful one of a dancing girl. The colours are in parts bright, and the gold medallions which stud the ceilings are still very perfect. These are valuable specimens of art, as it existed eighteen hundred years ago, and have been singularly preserved in this damp vault, amidst an almost universal decay ; they must however perish ere long, for the smoke of the guides' torches, and the water which oozes through the ground above, are doing the work of destruction effectually.

I had heard that the acanthus grew on this hill, and I looked for it long, with nothing to guide my search but the knowledge that its graceful foliage had given the first idea of the ornaments on the Corinthian capitals ; we found it at last, and recognised it by its long curling leaves : this plant, though growing here, only flowers in more southern latitudes.

Our cicerone here was no favourable specimen of Roman women ; nevertheless, as the guardian of these ruins, we braved her rudeness. Knowing that there was a villa standing in a beautiful garden on the Palatine, we asked her whether we could see it : in a tone of scorn she exclaimed, “ *Cosa volete? què avete palazzi, tempj, rovine, tutto, —e cercate dei giardini !* ”* In spite however of her indignation we visited them ; they are laid out by an English gentleman, a little too formally, but still with taste : he has availed himself of the ruins which are scattered over this hill, and their effect seen through the foliage of the trees is very picturesque. From one terrace-walk, sheltered by tall cypresses, there is a fine view of the Aventine and Cœlian hills, the Tiber, and a part of the city. “ In other places,” says Goethe, speaking of Rome generally, “ the important must be sought for—here it forces itself upon us, almost to excess. While walking or standing, beautiful pictures of every character and description present themselves before us—palaces and ruins, gardens and wildernesses—the remote and the present—triumphal arches and columns, houses and stables ; and all frequently in such immediate contact that they might be introduced into a single picture. Here

* “ What do you want ? You have here palaces, temples, ruins, everything,—and you ask for gardens ! ”

we ought to write with a thousand pens—of what avail is one?”

Below the Palatine hill was the famous Circus Maximus, planned by Tarquinius Priscus, and enlarged in succeeding ages, during which it continued a favourite place for the celebration of the Circensian Games. The accounts given by historians of the number of spectators which this Circus is said to have contained vary from 150,000 to 380,000! These games are of much greater antiquity than those of the Amphitheatre; the latter having been introduced under the emperors, while the former existed from the time of the kings of Rome, and, being celebrated in honour of their gods, constituted a part of the religion of the people: during the Republic they were encouraged and patronized by consuls and dictators. Flaminius, the Roman general, built a Circus, which bore his name. The only remains that exist of these buildings are in the Circus of Caracalla, the walls of which are standing, though much diminished in height, as well as the arch at the upper end, through which the victor passed. The *Spina*, or wall round which the chariots turned, may still be seen. Most of the obelisks brought from Egypt were placed in the circuses; the one found here now stands in the Piazza Navona.

The Circensian Games consisted principally of chariot, horse, and foot races, boxing and wrestling matches; in later times wild beasts were hunted in the arena, and the Naumachia was introduced. The cars were generally drawn by four horses, and were then called *quadrijugi*—when by only two, *bigæ*; a beautiful model in white marble of one of the latter is preserved in the Vatican. The *auriga*, or charioteer, stood during the race, and guided the horses with great skill; accidents however frequently happened, and chariots were overthrown. The victorious hero, crowned with bays and bearing a palm-branch in his hand, drove round the arena amidst the acclamations of the spectators, and disappeared under the triumphal arch. In the same room in the Vatican which contains the Biga, there is a noble statue of an Auriga, represented as just returning from his triumph.

One of the striking characteristics of the modern city is the Obelisks: of these, twelve rear their lofty shafts above the surrounding buildings, crowning the hills, and often terminating long vistas of streets. They were first brought from Egypt by Augustus; and succeeding emperors, following his example, removed these gigantic monuments of eastern antiquity to enrich the seat of their empire. Originally placed in the

circuses, baths, and other edifices of the ancient city, they were transferred by Papal command to modern Rome. The largest of these obelisks is situated in the open space near the church of San Giovanni in Laterano; a smaller one stands at the top of the noble flight of stairs which conducts from the Piazza di Spagna to the Trinità de' Monti; that in the Piazza of St. Peter's, which I have already mentioned, stood formerly in the Circus of Caligula, and was removed thence by Sixtus the Fifth and placed in the situation which it now occupies. The removal and re-erection of this mighty obelisk was entrusted to the architect Fontana, who employed several months in preparations: when the appointed day arrived, the ceremony was performed with great solemnity, the Pope himself celebrating high mass in St. Peter's.

The Piazza was thronged with people, and so important was it considered to preserve order, that it was prohibited on pain of death to speak while the engineers were at work. This order was transgressed by one of the Bresca family, who, seeing the ropes in danger of breaking from extreme friction, cried out to the engineers to wet them: he was rewarded by seeing the enormous shaft rise slowly and safely to its destined place: the acclamations of the spectators burst forth,

and the pardon of the offender was granted even before it was asked.

Of less antiquity, though not less interesting, are the two famous columns of Rome, of which that of Trajan is the most beautiful. The bassi-rilievi, which encircle it spirally from top to bottom, represent the conquests obtained by Trajan over the Dacians; these are in good preservation, and are said to contain two thousand five hundred figures. They are valuable as affording an insight into the customs and military accoutrements of the Romans, as well as those of their barbarian enemies: boats guided by an oar instead of a rudder—the wall of the camp, embattled, and the heads of the Dacian prisoners fastened on it—the Dacian women burning the Roman prisoners. The form of the helmets, shields, and weapons is shown, and the utensils employed for cooking; also the various devices on the standards; the Roman horses are seen with saddles, whilst the Dacian are without, and those of the Germans have neither saddles nor bridles*.

This pillar was erected, as the inscription states, by the Senate and people of Rome in honour of Trajan, after his return from the Dacian expedition; it stood in the Forum which Apollodorus had designed by order of the emperor, and which,

* See Burton's Description of Rome.

from the descriptions given by historians, must have been magnificent; a few broken columns are now all that remain. It is related that when Constantine, emperor of the East, visited Rome, A.D. 356, he was astonished at the beauty of this Forum—"a structure unique in the world, and worthy the admiration even of celestial beings." The equestrian bronze statue of Trajan, which stood there, excited his desire to possess it, and he would willingly have purchased it: a Persian prince, who heard him express the wish, said, "First order such a stable as this to be built for its reception."

A large golden ball was formerly placed on this pillar, in which the ashes of Trajan were deposited after his death; a statue of the emperor surmounted the whole. These were removed by the order of Sixtus the Fifth, and a bronze figure of St. Peter substituted.

The column which stands in the Piazza Colonna, usually called the Pillar of Antonine, was originally erected by the Senate in honour of Marcus Aurelius: the bassi-rilievi, representing the exploits of that emperor, are inferior to those on Trajan's Pillar. The imperial statue which formerly crowned it has given place to one of St. Paul.

January 24th.

AMONGST heroes, emperors, and popes, let me not forget to mention a person who has exercised a power of no common kind or degree in Rome, —I mean Pasquin. The mutilated statue so called, before whose caustic jests even popes and princes trembled, and which has given rise to the term ‘pasquinade’ adopted by all nations, is supposed to have been a fine specimen of Grecian sculpture ; it was discovered in the sixteenth century, and placed at the corner of the Palazzo Braschi, where several streets meet. It derived its present name from a facetious tailor, Pasquino, who by his satirical jokes drew people to his shop. In time, when written papers containing philippics against the powerful nobles of Rome, or satires on the government, were affixed to this statue, which stood near his house, it was said that the spirit of Pasquin spoke. The natural love of the Roman people for wit and satire caused these spirited placards to be highly relished, and the popes in vain endeavoured to stop the insolent sallies of Pasquin. Once he was condemned to summary punishment by Adrian the Sixth, who ordered the statue to be burnt and cast into the Tiber. Poor Pasquin was however rescued by the suggestion of one of the courtiers, who hinted that the ashes

would turn into frogs, and croak louder than ever from their watery abode. Many of these shafts of satire were directed against the popes: the following lines were on Leo the Tenth:

“ Sacra sub extremâ, si forte requiritis, horâ
Cur Leo non potuit sumere—vendiderat!*”

Pasquin thus addressed Paul the Third:

“ Ut canerent, data multa olim sunt vatibus æra :
Ut taceam, quantum tu mihi, Paule, dabis †.”

When Christina of Sweden died in Rome, this was Pasquin’s epitaph for her:

“ Regina, senza regno,
Christiana senza fede,
Donna senza vergogna. ‡”

At the time when the French were in possession of Rome, the caustic jester thus welcomed them:

“ I Francesi son tutti ladri.
* * * * *
Non tutti—ma buona parte §!”

The beautiful epigram on Canova’s statue of

* “ Do you ask why Leo did not take the sacrament on his death-bed?—He had sold it!”

† “ Formerly money was given to poets to sing: how much will you give me, Paul, to be silent?”

‡ “ A queen without a kingdom—a Christian (Christiana) without faith—a woman without modesty.”

§ “ The French are all robbers Not all—but *Buona parte* (a large portion).”

Italy is well known. The sculptor had enveloped his figure in drapery, and Pasquin said :

“ Questa volta, Canova, l’ hai sbagliata ;
Hai l’ Italia vestita, ed è spogliata* !”

Urban the Eighth, who robbed the Pantheon of its beautiful bronze roof, using part of the spoil to form the baldachino over the tomb of St. Peter, and giving the rest to his nephew Cardinal Barberini for the decoration of his palace, was thus addressed by Pasquin :

“ Quod non fecerunt Barbari Romæ, fecit Barberini †.”

There is another statue, at the opposite end of the city, called Marforio, which is supposed to have been originally the figure of an ocean-deity. It was found in the Forum of Mars (*Martis Forum*) and thence derives its name. To this are affixed similar satires. “When Marforio is attacked, Pasquin comes to his succour ; and when Pasquin is the sufferer, he finds in Marforio a constant defender. Thus by a thrust and a parry the most serious matters are disclosed, and the most illustrious personages are attacked by their enemies and defended by their friends‡.”

* “ This time, Canova, thou hast erred : thou hast clothed Italy, and she is stripped.”

† “ What the Barbarians did not to Rome, Barberini did.”

‡ See D’Israeli’s *Curiosities of Literature*, vol. ii. p. 78.

We have been to see the benediction of the animals at the church of Sant' Antonio on the Esquiline. Passing through Santa Maria Maggiore, which attracted us by the shade within its open door, one of those characteristic groups presented itself which we so often meet in the Roman churches. In one corner was a Capuchin, in his dark dress of coarse brown cloth, with the cowl thrown back, discovering his bare and tonsured head ; near him, a Trasteverino with his wide cloak flung round him like the ancient toga, and a girl wrapped in a bright red mantle. How often do I wish for the power to sketch the beautiful pictures which are constantly presented to us !

I have spoken of the Trasteverini, without telling you who they are. The name denotes their origin : they live beyond the Tiber, and, claiming to be descendants of the ancient Romans, hold in contempt the inhabitants of the modern city : they dwell as a separate people, and marry only amongst themselves. They are said to be very revengeful—never forgetting a kindness, but never forgiving an injury ; indeed they have been known to cherish feelings of vengeance for years, and when the moment for it arrived the long knife they carry has seldom failed to secure it.

But I must return to that most absurd of all absurd ceremonies, Sant' Antonio's benediction.

Reaching the great western door of Santa Maria Maggiore, we saw the wide plain before it covered with a multitude of people—an animated and amusing scene. The church of Sant' Antonio was dressed as for a festa, the walls hung with festoons of coloured drapery, and the floor strewn with evergreens; it was filled with people in holiday dresses; some engaged in devotion, but the greater part sauntering idly about. The ceremony which we came to see took place on the steps of the church, where the priest stood, brush in hand, ready to bless the animals as they arrived.

It was a pretty sight to watch the troops of horsemen, as they rode up, their steeds gaily caparisoned, with streamers of ribbons flying, and their hats wreathed with them, bearing in their hands large wax candles—sometimes two or three bound together—offerings to the shrine of the saint. As they drew up, the priest muttered a prayer for the safety and preservation of the animals during the ensuing year: then blessing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, he shook his aspersorium, or brush with holy water, over them, and they made way for others. We stood beside the priest some time, watching the groups advancing: now a party of the *guardiani* (keepers) of the Campagna would appear, or

a vetturino with his team of horses ; now a train of boys, bestriding their donkeys, or a cart filled with peasants in costume, followed perhaps by some fashionable equipage. There was something so serio-comic in the whole, that I could not divest myself of the feeling that it was all a jest, a sort of child's play, at which even the priest could not but smile.

LETTER XVIII.

Rome, January 29th.

Our interest in the churches of Rome continues unabated, although we have visited so many as to make it impossible for me to describe them all. My eye is become accustomed to the gorgeous decorations which Catholics lavish so profusely on their temples of worship, and I now find much to admire in them. The marbles, which form their chief ornament, are rich and varied, and I never grow weary of looking at them; whilst many of the churches possess an interest, unconnected with mere external beauty, in the legends attached to them, or in the works of art which they contain. Perhaps no excursion has furnished me with more food for thought than that we made yesterday.

The beauty of the weather tempted us beyond the walls of Rome, and we drove to the church of San Sebastiano. In the aisle we met one of the Franciscan friars, who inhabit an adjoining convent, and requested of him permission to visit the Catacombs. Placing a wax taper in the hand of each of our party, and opening a door, he descended

first, begging us to follow closely. A long flight of stairs conducted us to these singular subterranean burying-places. The feeling of awe with which I entered them was heightened by the effect our party produced; I was one of the last, and could see the whole line before me, headed by our friar-guide, whose dark brown dress and austere face, partly concealed by his cowl and illumined by the taper he carried, was in strange harmony with the scene. He told us that these Catacombs extended under Rome, and branched in various directions beneath the country around; that they had been opened for fifteen miles, and were found to reach to the sea: many passages have been left even yet unexplored, and their extent is by no means known.

In consequence of several accidents having occurred, many of these galleries have been again closed; he mentioned one fact, which, heard under the influence of the place, thrilled me with horror: a whole college of students, consisting of sixty persons, having persisted in examining the Catacombs without a guide, were lost! I shall never forget the deep tone of the friar's voice as he uttered those words, "*Mai, mai trovati—nè vivi, nè morti**!" and as in the short and narrow turnings I often lost sight of the guide and the foremost of

* "*Never, never found—either alive or dead!*"

our party, I grasped still closer the hand of my nearest companion.

It is said that these vaulted passages were excavated originally for the pozzolana, or sandstone, which they yielded ; and that their mazy and secret labyrinths served as places of shelter and concealment to the early Christians during the times of persecution. Here, literally in the darkness of the tomb, these unhappy men sought an asylum from the fury which pursued their adherence to the truth ; here too the bodies of their less fortunate friends, who had fallen victims to the blind fury of their imperial persecutors, were brought by stealth during the night and interred in silence and sorrow.

As I looked at the small recesses which served these martyrs for their faith as chapels, containing still the plain cross of white marble before which they had bent, worshiping Him in whose cause they were ready to encounter the most painful and ignominious death, I felt humbled at the thought of how little we more favoured believers are willing to sacrifice for our religion. But the strength of the human heart can alone be tested in times of such difficulty and danger ; then we see the weak become strong, and rising superior to suffering. In those awful times, women, nay even children, were seen to endure with unflinching fortitude all that the art of man could invent of torture—strong in

the belief that their "light afflictions, which were but for a moment, would work out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

I think that, in despising the legends of the Catholic calendar, we are too apt to forget that beneath a mass of superstition lies buried a glorious germ of truth. It was in defence of the principles which Jesus lived and died to inculcate, that these early Christians suffered; and, in rejecting what is childish and absurd, let us not forget to venerate what is true and holy. These thoughts filled my mind as I wandered amidst the tombs of the martyrs; and, though I listened incredulously to strange and impossible tales of miracles performed by the saints, yet the feeling of reverence could not be destroyed.

The Catacombs have been stripped of their inscriptions, which are placed in the long gallery of the Vatican; here and there however a word still remains. The following one, which I copied from a book I lately met with, was probably written during one of the persecutions:—

"O tempora infausta! quibus inter sacra et vota ne in cavernis quidem salvari possumus. Quid miserius vitâ? Quid morte? cum ab amicis et parentibus sepeliri nequeamus*."

* "O wretched times! when we cannot even find safety in caverns, amongst sacred and holy things. What more miserable than life? what more so than death? when we are denied burial by our friends and relatives."

The following passage from St. Jerome shows how the Catacombs were regarded in his time. He says, "When I was a boy in Rome, studying literature there, it was my custom on holidays to resort with my companions to the places where the martyrs of our faith were buried, and we visited the Catacombs which enclosed their venerated dust. Such was the obscurity of these subterranean abodes, that the words of the Prophet Jeremiah seemed almost fulfilled—'It was a hell, into which the living descended.' " Catholic writers affirm that fourteen Popes and one hundred and seventy thousand Christians were buried in these Catacombs! The bodies were laid on shelves—one above another, sometimes eight or ten deep—and then built up. These tombs have been opened, and many a church has been furnished with holy relics from the gloomy vaults. A curious story, told me the other day, may perhaps afford you amusement, and is *à propos* of our present subject. It exhibits in a melancholy light the present degraded state of religion here.

Not long ago, a Sicilian priest, whose church had lost much of its popularity, and whose pocket suffered sensibly by the falling off in his congregation, determined to make a vigorous effort to regain his flock and his revenue. For this purpose he undertook a journey to Rome; and, re-

questing an interview with the Pope, obtained from him permission to visit the Catacombs and take thence some saintly relics. He eagerly began his search, and finding a skeleton in one tomb, with an inscription partly obliterated, but in which the words PHILO MENA were still visible, he possessed himself of the treasure and christened his new saint Filomena. Depositing the bones in a box, which was strapped behind the carriage, he set out on his journey home. He had not proceeded far, when he was surprised by a loud knocking at the back of the coach; he looked out, but saw no one: it was repeated, and he then became aware that the saint was highly displeased at the indignity shown in placing her in such a situation. The priest, anxious to make all the reparation in his power, removed the box to the seat opposite him. Still the saint was restless, and resumed the knocking; and it was not until she was placed in the post of honour, with her face to the horses, that she was satisfied. On stopping at a little village for the night, the good priest, anxious to show all possible respect to his newly-found patron, conveyed the box containing her bones to a convent in the neighbourhood, leaving it under the care of the holy sisters. It was reverently placed in the chapel. At midnight, one of the nuns, who was in ill health,

came to offer prayers to the new saint for her recovery. She was alarmed on hearing sounds issue from the box, and a voice desiring her not to be frightened, but to approach nearer. The nun listened eagerly, whilst Santa Filomena proceeded to tell her that she was a great favourite in Heaven, and that she would intercede for her restoration to health : she then begged her to pass the night with her, and professed her willingness to reveal the circumstances of her life to the astonished and delighted sister. This life is published, and a greater tissue of absurdity was never read. It states that she was the daughter of a captive king, brought to Rome by Dioclesian, with whom she held many interesting conversations on the truth of Christianity ; and that she there suffered martyrdom, in the persecutions during his reign.

The priest's mission was eminently successful ; the fame of the miracles wrought by the new saint brought crowds of pilgrims to her shrine, and plenty of money to his coffers. There is not a saint in the whole Catholic calendar who possesses greater celebrity than "*la santissima, ammirabilissima Filomena :*" altars are raised to her in the churches, prayers are addressed to her : she has her own festa-day, and shares with the Madonna the hearts and worship of the ignorant and infatuated people. Such a tale of abject su-

perstition may surprise you, and indeed it is difficult to understand how in a civilized age such absurdities can obtain credit. It is melancholy to think, that, while other countries have awakened to a better faith, Italy, which was the first to emerge from the ignorance spread over Europe during the Middle Ages, should have sunk deeper than ever in the darkness of superstition.

We left the Catacombs, and, breathing once more the fresh air of the Campagna, turned our steps to the Fountain of Egeria, the situation of which owes perhaps much of its beauty to the contrast with the surrounding country. In the sheltered valley in which it stands, overshadowed by trees and amidst the wild flowers growing in profusion around, the mind finds a sweet repose from the oppressive feelings which arise from contemplating the wide plains of the Campagna—

“The grave of giant Rome!

Where every stone beneath your feet
Is broken from some mighty thought,
And sunder'd arch and plunder'd tomb
Still thunder back the echo—Rome!”

How refreshing is it to the mind, to turn from the ruins of an empire to the beauties of nature! and in this feeling lies the charm of Egeria. In the memories that attach to the ruined fountain nothing of sadness mingles; a pleasant kind of

mystery, as of a fairy-tale, belongs to the spot. For who, while watching the fountain gushing forth in two gentle streams, would stay to question the truth of the sweet fable which tells how Numa sought repose from the cares of his kingdom in the society of the nymph Egeria; how by her wise counsels he governed his people in equity and love; and how on his death she withdrew to the neighbourhood of Aricia, where Diana, moved to compassion by her ceaseless tears, changed her into a fountain, whose waters ever flowing seek this spot, where the nymph was accustomed to meet her beloved Numa?

We returned to Rome by the Via Appia, which is interesting on many accounts; it remains a specimen of the ancient Roman roads, and by its solid masonry shows how these men "built for eternity." These roads were frequently constructed of huge blocks of stone, closely fitted together without cement, yet so firmly compacted that neither friction nor the action of time and weather have impaired their solidity: after the lapse of more than two thousand years, we still travel on these roads; and, though the smooth macadamized ways of England may be preferable to these rugged ones of the ancients, yet we delight in the thought of passing over the very road which has so often been traversed by great men of former ages.

Along the Appian Way we trace the custom of the Romans of burying their dead in the public roads beyond the walls of the city. The country through which this road passes is lined on each side with sepulchres for a considerable distance ; some of them preserve their ancient form of small Greek temples, cupolas, towers, &c. ; others lie prostrate in the dust, while around are strewn fragments of marble, showing that their destruction may be traced not merely to the influence of time, but to their rich decorations, which had incited to plunder. It is impossible to walk along this avenue of tombs, this silent and deserted empire of the dead, without being struck with the honour paid by the ancients to the departed ; the tombs and mausoleums they raised in memory of emperors, heroes, or friends, exceeded in magnitude and splendour anything of the kind which modern times present to us. Many of these tombs have been, as I have before observed, converted into fortresses ; others, from their size and beauty when seen at a distance, might be taken for the ruins of temples or palaces ; in some instances the smaller ones have been cleared, and the grave of the ancient Roman has become the abode of the modern *contadino*, whose poverty drives him to seek an asylum from which the mind recoils.

The most interesting tomb on the Via Appia

is that which bears the inscription “Sepulchra Scipionum”—the sepulchre of the Scipios; and, although it is doubted whether the ashes of the famous conqueror of Hannibal reposed here, yet, as the mausoleum of one of the high republican families, we must regard it with peculiar interest. The sarcophagus has been removed to the Vatican, and nothing but a ruined vault remains where it formerly stood. It is late, and I must conclude.

LETTER XIX.

Rome, January 31st.

WE have lately taken many long walks through both ancient and modern Rome, and have thus seen much more of the people, of their manners, dress and customs. Perhaps no place can offer greater variety of costume ; and the habits of the poorer classes are so different from those of our English peasantry, that in every walk something strange and new presents itself. The groups I often see recall to my mind Pinelli's spirited sketches, and we stop in admiration before them. Long trains of carts, each covered with a pent-house of rough skins, are drawn by the large grey oxen of the country, to whose gigantic horns a pole is attached by which they are harnessed. These are driven by peasants, whose swarthy complexions vie in colour with the dark sheep-skin dresses they wear ; while their conical hats, often garlanded with ribbons, and their shaggy goat-skin aprons, give them a wild and

picturesque look. From beneath the covered cart, a bright-eyed girl is sometimes seen peeping at the *forestieri*, for whom she has always a smile : her pretty square white muslin head-dress, and scarlet boddice laced with blue ribbons, set off her noble head and form, and give a peculiar character to her beautiful Roman face.

At the corner of a piazza, a *scrittore*, or scribe, is seated at his table, with pen in hand, busily occupied in writing from the dictation of a Trasteverino or some gentle maiden the tale of love or of revenge. In this narrow street the cook, in his white apron and cap, is engaged in preparing his *frittura* of fish, or messes of meat and vegetables ; whilst, standing or sitting around, are groups of people eagerly devouring the savoury delicacies. In another street you may chance to see two Pifferari, straining harsh discord in honour of a Madonna, who sits enthroned in a small shrine fixed in the wall above.

Figures often pass us in long sackcloth robes, and pointed head-dresses of the same material, which cover the face, leaving only two holes for the eyes ; and shaking a little money-box before us, they beg "*elemosine, per l'amore di Dio !*" (alms, for the love of God !) These persons, called Sacconi, are penitents, condemned to wander barefoot through the streets as a humiliation

for their sins ; it is said that bishops, cardinals and princes often submit to the penance.

On the walls are sometimes seen strange grotesque figures, which bring to my mind the description in the ‘*Promessi Sposi*’—“*quelle certe figure, lunghe serpeggianti, terminate in punta, che nella intenzione dell’ artista, ed agli occhi degli abitanti, volevano dir fiamme ; ed alternate colle fiamme, certe altre figure da non potersi descrivere, che volevano dire anime in purgatorio—anime e fiamme a colore di matone, sur un fondo grigiastro**.”

I must describe the figure of a lovely young country-girl whom I saw in the Vatican yesterday ; her face and form were perfectly beautiful, and the satisfaction she evinced in a consciousness of the admiration she excited was very amusing : her cheek was dimpled with smiles, and her eyes sparkled with roguish merriment and coquetry. Her dress was a most studied and finished specimen of a Roman toilette : the petticoat was of delicate blue silk ; the boddice, lacing behind and

* “Those long, winding figures, terminating in a point, which in the intention of the artist, and actually in the eyes of the inhabitants, represent flames ; and alternately with the flames are certain other figures not to be described, meant to express souls in purgatory,—the souls and flames being of the colour of brick, on a greyish ground.”

before over a chemisette of the purest white, was of brilliant scarlet ; and the sleeves of silver tissue, tight to the elbow, were fastened to the boddice with pink bows and streamers ; a shawl of embroidered muslin was negligently thrown over her shoulders. The head-gear was the most exquisite thing I ever saw ; her hair, glossy and black, was braided and hung in loops behind ; these were confined to the top of the head by a silver bodkin, from which on one side hung little flagree flowers of the same material : over all was the square of pure white muslin, trimmed with dainty lace, which, standing out on the top of the head like an university cap, fell behind gracefully to the waist. She was a picture—I could scarcely take my eyes from her.

But of all the curious figures we see in this wonderful city, none interest me so much as the Monks, Friars, and other bodies of the regular clergy. I have endeavoured to learn their different orders. Amongst the most numerous are the Franciscan Friars, clad in brown or grey garments, with a girdle of cord and sandaled feet. The Capuchins, who are a sect of Franciscans, have in addition a long beard, and are a dirty, ill-looking race : I have in vain watched, in passing their long processions, for a single fine face : all have a dark, scowling and sinister expression ; some

appearing sunk in cold apathy, while in the countenances of others might be read the workings of debasing passions. The Dominicans are less displeasing in their appearance; they wear white garments, with black cowls and scapularies and black girdles. The Carmelites are entirely clothed in white, even to their shoes and hats; and in contrast to these are the Jesuits, all in black, with shovel hats.

There are, besides these various subordinate fraternities,—the *Frați* of Santa Maddelena, with their black dress and red cross; the scholars of the Seminario Romano, with violet robes and triangular hats; and the members of the Propaganda, with red girdles and red buttons on black garments. The priests too are always known by their black, as are the bishops by their violet dress; whilst the cardinals can never be mistaken, in their fiery red robes, red shoes, red skull-caps and red hats.

You cannot feel the same interest as I do in all that belongs to Catholicism, and perhaps you may begin to imagine that my Protestant faith is shaken. I would only wish those who are yielding to the influence of Catholicism at home, to be transported to Rome, its head-quarters, and the charm would I think be dispelled—the veil be rent from the idol. I have known good En-

glish Catholics turn with disgust from the form in which their religion is presented to them here ; and I have often heard the remark made, that the nearer you approach the metropolis of Catholicism, the more deeply are its ceremonies tinctured with superstition, and the more degrading are its effects on the mind. There is much in it however which early filled me with wonder and amazement, and which still awakens in my mind feelings of deep and powerful interest. I cannot contemplate this religion without veneration ; its institution has been ordained by Providence, and, with all its errors and corruptions, as we deem them, has been fraught with many blessings to mankind.

We have briefly traced the history of Catholicism through the ages in which its power was greatest—when imperial and kingly power was humbled in the dust by its decrees, monarchs trembled on their thrones, and subjects were prostrated in terror at the thunders of the Vatican. That same religion is now seen stripped of its power, degraded and fallen—maintaining in its decay the form and semblance of greatness, while the substance is gone—the body, from which the soul is departed. We may be thankful that the time has arrived in which “man may put away these childish things,” and rejoice that we live to see it ; but

let us not forget what as Christians we owe to Catholicism; how its strong and sturdy bark weathered the rude storm which swept over the face of civilized Europe, bearing in its prow the light which was to rekindle the torch of truth in the world, when, again restored to tranquillity, man should be awakened to something purer and holier. Let us not forget that it was in the monasteries of the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries that our Bible was preserved; that, when every other spark of learning had become extinct, and earth was desolated with war and rapine, it was in the quiet precincts of the cloister that the sacred love of knowledge was kept alive. Ecclesiastics were then the only persons of education; monks (particularly the illustrious order of the Benedictines) were employed in collecting and copying manuscripts, thus preserving and multiplying the treasures from which the scholar of modern times derives his chief delight; and, as one of our most elegant female writers says, “the Muses too with their attendant Arts, in a strange disguise and uncouth trappings indeed, took refuge in the peaceful gloom of the convent; Statuary carved a Madonna or a crucifix, Painting illuminated a missal, Eloquence made the panegyric of a saint, and History composed a legend; yet still they breathed, and were ready at any happier period to emerge

from obscurity, with all their native charms and undiminished lustre*.”

There is an important historical difference, not generally attended to, between the several classes of regular clergy. The institution of Monks is of the highest antiquity; their principal orders were founded in the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries of the Christian æra; whilst the Friars had no existence until the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when they were established by the Popes, who employed them as missionaries: such were the Franciscans and Dominicans, the latter of whom were invested with the fearful powers of the Inquisition.

The social government of Monks and Friars differs widely; whilst the former are permitted by their rules to live in richly endowed monasteries, and, as a community, to hold landed property to any amount, the Friars are enjoined by their founders to live on alms and retain no property whatsoever. Monasteries (the houses of Monks) are for the most part remote from towns: the convents of the Friars are generally in the midst of populous cities. The Monks scarcely ever leave their monasteries, and live in cells apart, eating alone, and seldom conversing. Friars, on the contrary, mix with the world, and are constantly seen walking about, and they eat in a common refectory.

* Mrs. Barbauld's Essay on Monastic Institutions.

Of the Monks, the chief orders are the Benedictines, Carthusians and Cistercians, the Monks of Clugny, of Camaldoli, and of Monte Oliveto, or Olivetani, with many others I forget. The monastic orders have always been connected with the higher classes in society. Some of the monasteries near Rome admitted none within their cloisters who were not of noble birth; they used to keep a coach or coaches for the use of the brethren, when they had occasion to leave the monastery. Amongst the Friars were the three great mendicant orders—the Dominicans, the Franciscans, and the Carmelites—or Black, Grey and White Friars; these orders have also subdivisions, or *reforms*, as I before said the Capuchins are of the Franciscans.

Of all these classes of men none are perhaps so interesting as the Jesuits, an order of much later institution. I do not think that the world ever witnessed so wonderful a display of human ingenuity and talent as their system of policy; they reared a power which bade defiance to all existing governments, and acquired such an ascendancy over the minds of kings, rulers and princes, that they guided at will the affairs of nations, shook the Pope on his throne, overthrew dynasties, and, under the garb of humility and self-denial, enjoyed a power almost unlimited. This sect was founded

in the year 1540, by Ignatius Loyola, a Biscayan, a man of vigorous and commanding intellect: having won the Pope, Paul the Third, to think favourably of his design, he was by him appointed the first General of the Order. Previous to this time, in the early part of the fifteenth century, man had begun to call in question Papal authority and infallibility, and to assert the right of private judgement. Jerome of Prague and John Huss had aroused a spirit of free inquiry. The Popes, alarmed at the progress of the new doctrines, were well pleased to favour a sect whose avowed purpose was to support and defend Catholicism; and while Luther and his followers were pulling down the Papal throne on one side, the Jesuits were employed in propping it up on the other.

The success which attended the Jesuits may be as justly attributed to the zeal and ability of the immediate successors of Loyola—Loyneza and Acquaviva—as to himself. They confirmed and perfected the laws which he had formed, adding others, founded on the most profound and accurate knowledge of the human heart. Their College was established at Rome, where their General resides; and it was said that “the hilt of the sword was there, whose point was everywhere.” The members were exempted from the duties of other ecclesiastical bodies; their sphere of action

was the world: to study the dispositions of men in power, to ingratiate themselves into their confidence, to flatter their weakness, and accommodate themselves to their passions, these were the purposes for which they lived. There was scarcely a court in Europe in which they were not the confessors of princes and nobles; and by the extent of their learning and abilities, as well as by flattering the vices of the powerful, they secretly gained a political and moral influence, the extent of which was only felt on great occasions; they mingled in every event, and took part, though unseen, in all intrigues and revolutions.

The course of education to which the younger members were subjected was severe and profound in the extreme; on their superior learning rested much of the power of the Order, and none but men of the highest intellect were admitted to offices in the College. The young aspirants passed through a probation of many years, and then gained admission to the mysteries of the institution by slow and laborious steps. Besides the vows of celibacy, poverty, and obedience to Papal authority, there was another still more solemn, by which they resigned themselves body and soul into the hands of the General—binding themselves to reveal to him, or to the officers he should appoint, every secret thought of their hearts, every

half-formed wish: each individual was a spy on the actions of his brethren, and any concealment of the faults of another was a crime. So firmly were the parts of the machine compacted, so admirably did wheel move within wheel, that the General became aware of everything that was passing throughout Europe; and as he had the minds and hearts of all his subordinates laid bare before him, he knew the exact tools he had to work with; he could remove his forces from one place to another, subject the weaker to more strict surveillance, or, where he found a firm and trusty disciple, place him in the post of danger: his commands were never questioned.

Fearful and terrible was the power which the Jesuits possessed, and they have exercised it in too many instances in oppressing man and subjecting him to spiritual despotism. They shrank from no means, however atrocious, public or private, by which they could attain their end; deceit, fraud, treachery, ingratitude, and all the blackest crimes sully their history; they considered everything justifiable which established their power and tended to save Catholicism, shaken to its foundations by the attacks of Luther and his successors.

All however is not dark in their history. In the sixteenth century, under St. Xavier and Ricci, they introduced the blessings of Christianity and

the results of European science within the forbidden precincts of China and Japan, where all subsequent missionaries have failed even to retain what the Jesuits had acquired. The only maps of China which we possess were made from their trigonometrical survey of the empire; and all the best information which exists in Europe respecting those interesting and puzzling countries is to be found in the "*Lettres Edifiantes*," a collection of most valuable histories and records of the progress made by the society for the propagation of the faith.

In the seventeenth century they colonized part of South America, and their institutions in Paraguay were founded in a truly Christian spirit; whilst other nations conquered and oppressed the poor Indians, the Jesuits instructed them in the arts of civilized life, and were their real benefactors.

Their ambition and power, however, were found to be so formidable, that they were expelled from many of the courts of Europe. Charles the Fifth of Germany, meeting with great opposition to his schemes from the Jesuits, gave them a severe check; and during the middle of the eighteenth century they were banished from Spain, Portugal and France. In 1773 they were totally suppressed by Clement the Fourteenth, who from his liberality

was called the Protestant Pope, and whose death was said to have been hastened by poison administered by a Jesuit. They have since regained some degree of power; in Naples they are restored to court favour, and hold offices of trust in the State; their chief desire is to superintend the education of the young, and in that city they are the directors of the military and other public schools. At Florence so strongly was the disapprobation of the people expressed at an attempt made to restore the Jesuits, that the Grand Duke wisely desisted; papers, expressive of the odium in which they are held, were posted on the promenades, laid in the Duke's box at the opera, and even thrown into his carriage as he passed along the streets. In Venice they are watched as rigidly as the Jews, and, although permitted to purchase property and reside in the city, they are obliged to obtain a written permission from the Government, which must be renewed every three years. In Rome we see them continually in the streets, and they present a striking contrast to the Friars: their countenances bear the marks of intelligence, although shaded by a dark melancholy, with a repulsive and impenetrable expression. They are always seen in pairs, in accordance with the system of espionage kept up amongst them.

Before concluding the subject of the Jesuits,

which from the interest I feel in it has detained me so long, I must mention the tomb of Ignatius Loyola, in the church of Jesus; over it is a figure in silver of this extraordinary man, rising to Heaven amidst angels and clouds executed in the same material. One of these angels supports an immense globe of lapis-lazuli, the largest piece of this precious stone in the world, and pillars of the same rise on each side. Catholicism, personified as a woman with a crucifix in her hand, is trampling under foot the monster Heresy. It is a gorgeous work, but by no means beautiful. This church we visit frequently, to hear the Jesuits preach; their style is remarkably fervid, and at times eloquent, and their delivery is accompanied with wondrous gesticulation. In the fervour of his discourse the preacher will often turn to the crucifix placed on the side of the pulpit, and apostrophize it in the following passionate terms: “O amabilissimo mio Gesù! Tu che avevi per padre un Dio, per madre una Vergine, e che eri tu stesso l’Iddio eterno, ascoltami! *”

* “O my beloved Jesus! thou who hadst a God for a father, a Virgin for a mother, and wert thyself the eternal God, hear me!”

LETTER XX.

Rome, February 2nd.

SINCE I last wrote to you of Michael Angelo I have seen all his greatest works, and will not longer delay, however unwillingly, speaking to you of them; I say unwillingly, because it is painful and humiliating to feel that the works of such a man are beyond the reach of my comprehension. I can scarcely describe to you the feelings with which I have stood before the 'Last Judgement' in the Sistine Chapel, and the statue of Moses, —striving to discover that beauty which would arouse a feeling of pleasure, and diminish the mortified sense of ignorance which stood like a dark shadow between me and them.

The 'Last Judgement' is so much injured by the smoke of the candles, which burn on the altar beneath it, that the figures are discerned with difficulty; it is only by studying the design of the artist in the engravings of this celebrated fresco that any idea can be formed of it as a whole. The foreshortening of the figures is wonderful; almost

every attitude which the human body can assume is here portrayed; and as a study it is, I can well believe, invaluable; but there is to my perception so total an absence of grace, dignity, and sentiment, that it seems wanting in the best attributes of a painting. The epigram which Salvator Rosa wrote on this fresco is severe:

“Michel Angiolo mio, non parlo in giuoco,
Questo che dipingete è un gran Giudizio,
Ma del giudizio voi n’ avete poco*.”

The Prophets and Sibyls, which are painted on the compartments of the ceiling, are full of majesty, and in breadth and grandeur of design unequalled; but from their situation they are not easily seen, requiring a strong light: often as I have visited the Sistine Chapel, I have not been able to distinguish them more than two or three times.

The frequent appearance of the Sibyls in Catholic churches excited my wonder; knowing them to have been entirely of Pagan origin, I could not imagine how they had found admittance into Christian temples. The mystery is thus explained. The Sibyls, who were five in number

* “Michel Angiolo, I speak not in jest: this which you paint is a great Judgement, but of judgement you possess little.”

—the Cumæan, Erythrean, Persian, Libyan and Delphian—were supposed to dwell in caves, and from time to time to deliver oracles and prophecies to mankind; these were carefully collected and preserved in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, and historians constantly mention that reference was made to them when difficulties arose in the state. The early fathers of the Catholic Church, anxious to avail themselves of everything to strengthen the claims of their religion, appealed to some obscure passages in these “Sibylline Leaves,” which they interpreted into prophecies of the advent of our Saviour; and thus the introduction of these Pagan prophetesses into the Christian churches is accounted for.

Mr. Gunn, in his learned Essay on Gothic Architecture, makes the following interesting remark in speaking of Milton’s journey to Italy, and its effects on such a mind as his. “Throughout his sublime poem, there are allusions of which he would have been unconscious, had he never attentively studied the works of ancient and modern art, so abundantly dispersed over the capitals of Italy. Milton traced in these works the ideas as they emanated from the minds of their authors, and qualified himself to hold intercourse with intellectual nature.” He mentions, as instances of happy appropriation of the painter’s ideas by

the poet, Eve first beholding Adam, taken from the vault of the Sistine Chapel—Satan and the infernal regions, from the ‘Last Judgement,’ and adduces many other equally striking proofs to support his assertion. Now if we remember that Michael Angelo drew much of the inspiration which guided his pencil in designing the ‘Last Judgement’ from a careful study of Dante’s ‘Inferno,’ we see how beautifully the arts depend on one another, and subserve to each other’s progress; how Painting reflected back on her sister Poetry the glorious light she had received from her.

The statue of Moses occupies a place on the tomb of Julius the Second, in the church of San Pietro in Vincolo. The original design of the mausoleum was never completed, and this was intended to have formed one of a group of figures equally colossal; it now stands alone, and is placed so near the ground as to lose much of its effect. I will not presume to criticize this celebrated statue; for it would be equally insincere to profess an admiration which I cannot feel, as unbecoming in me to pronounce an opinion at variance with that of so many far better able to appreciate the merits of the work. I however derive no small comfort from a passage I lately met with in Sir Joshua Reynolds’ works, where he speaks of the Stanze of Rafael; if so great an artist did not hesitate to

confess his disappointment on first viewing these works, we need not shrink from an expression of the same feeling with regard to those of Michael Angelo. "Though disappointed," he says, "in justice to myself I did not for one moment conceive or suppose that the name of Rafael, and those admirable paintings in particular, owed their reputation to the ignorance and prejudice of mankind; on the contrary, my not relishing them, as I was conscious I ought to have done, was one of the most humiliating circumstances that ever happened to me. I found myself in the midst of works executed upon principles with which I was unacquainted; I felt my ignorance, and stood abashed. All the undigested notions of painting which I had brought with me from England, where the art was in the lowest state, were to be totally done away and eradicated from my mind. It was necessary, as it is expressed on a very solemn occasion, that I should become as 'a little child.' Notwithstanding my disappointment, I proceeded to copy some of these excellent works. I viewed them again and again; I even affected to feel their merit, and to admire them more than I really did. In a short time a new taste and new perceptions began to dawn upon me, and I was convinced that I had originally formed a false opinion of the perfection of art; and that this great painter was well en-

titled to the high rank which he holds in the estimation of the world. The truth is, that if these works had really been what I expected, they would have contained beauties superficial and alluring, but by no means such as would have entitled them to the great reputation which they have so long and so justly obtained."

How admirable are these remarks, from so eminent an artist—conveying the strongest testimony to the greatness of his own mind, and his just appreciation of the works which he studied!

We have seen more of the extent of the Vatican today, which is indeed rather like a town than a palace: the apartments occupied by the Pope form a very small part of the buildings, and are situated on the western side of the Loggie of Rafael; strangers are not permitted to see these, but are allowed to range at will through the galleries and halls forming the Museum, and the apartments containing the frescos of Rafael. The library may be seen by asking permission at the door; we visited it today, with some other rooms accessible only by an order.

Conducted by our intelligent guide, we passed through many winding passages and little secret doors, now mounting steep flights of stairs, and again descending others, until we found ourselves in the picture gallery, reaching it in half the time

it would have taken us had we gone the usual way through the Museum. From this we proceeded to the ‘Sala delle Carte Geografiche,’ a beautiful long gallery, the walls of which are painted in fresco with maps of all the Papal dominions, ground-plans of the cities, and bird’s-eye views of the ports. This gallery, which is a quarter of a mile in length, was built by Julius the Second, to serve as a promenade in wet weather : it was a favourite resort of the late pontiff, Pius the Eighth ; but the present Pope, Gregory the Sixteenth, who is more active and stronger, does not confine himself to this gallery, but ranges through the whole Museum, which is cleared of strangers whenever the Santo Padre wishes to take a walk ; he never leaves the palace but in a carriage.

We passed on from this apartment to the rooms formerly inhabited by Pius the Fifth, which, from his having been canonized, are now considered too holy to be occupied by any one. When Buonaparte was in possession of Rome, he re-opened these rooms, and caused them to be hung with the *Arazzi*, or tapestry, for which Rafael designed his celebrated Cartoons. These great works of art were executed by order of Leo the Tenth : Mr. Roscoe, in his admirable life of that pontiff, gives the following account of them.

“Leo having determined to ornament one of the

apartments of the Vatican with tapestry, at that time woven in Flanders with the utmost perfection, requested Raffaello to furnish the designs from such portions of Scripture history as might be suitable for the purpose. The passages he chose were selected from the Acts of the Apostles; and these he designed on Cartoons, or paper, as models for the imitation of the Flemish artists. The pieces of tapestry wrought from these designs were executed with a harmony of colour and brilliancy of effect that astonished all who saw them, and seemed rather the productions of the pencil than the loom. But although the tapestry arrived in Rome, the Cartoons, yet more valuable, were suffered to remain in the hands of the Flemish workmen, from whose descendants it is supposed they were purchased in the ensuing century by Charles the First of England. During the disturbances which soon afterwards arose in these kingdoms, these precious monuments were exposed to sale with the rest of the royal collection; but Cromwell was not so devoid of taste as to permit them to be lost to this country, and directed that they should be purchased." Many years afterwards they were discovered in a chest, "cut into strips for the use of the tapestry-weavers, but in other respects not materially injured."

There were originally ten Cartoons, but only

seven are now preserved at Hampton Court. The *arazzi* are in excellent preservation, and the subjects are the following:

1. **Elymas struck blind*.—The upper part of this only remains; the lower was cut off, and pawned in times of Papal distress for the value of the gold and silver threads interwoven in the dresses! All the heads and part of the figures remain.

2. **The Delivery of the Keys to Peter*.

3. *The Earthquake*—which freed Paul from prison—represented by a huge giant, buried in the earth, and struggling to free himself.

4. **The Sick Man healed at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple*.—5. **The Death of Ananias*.—6. *The Stoning of Stephen*.—7. *The Conversion of St. Paul*.—8. **Paul and Barnabas at Lystra*.—9. **The Miraculous Draught of Fishes*.—10. **Paul pleading at Athens*.†

Our considerate guide allowed us full time to view these, which are scattered through several rooms, and we then proceeded by long suites of

* Those marked with an asterisk are at Hampton Court.

† Kugler mentions another series of twelve Cartoons in the Vatican, supposed to have been designed by Rafael, and probably executed by his scholars. Amongst these are 'The Massacre of the Innocents,' 'The Nativity,' 'The Adoration of the Magi,' 'The Resurrection,' 'The Pilgrims of Emmaus,' 'The Ascension,' and 'The Pentecost.'

deserted chambers to a curious staircase, or *via cordonnata*, built by Bramante. In former times, before Julius the Second erected the Sala Geografica, which connects two wings of the palace, the Popes used to be carried in litters by mules up this paved ascent.

We were admitted also into a small chapel, the Cappella di Nicolo Quinto, which I was very anxious to see, as it contained frescos by Fra Angelico da Fiesole which are classed amongst his best works. The subjects are chosen from the events of the lives of St. Stephen and St. Laurence, with full-length figures of other saints ; they are characterized by great truth and purity of expression, and are in tolerable preservation. The series of paintings connected with the life of St. Stephen begins with his ordination, and ends with his death. One, representing a group listening in attitudes of intense interest and attention to his preaching, contains several female figures seated, with children near them ; the heads are expressive and very beautiful. I had not before seen such favourable specimens of the works of a master, whose pure and holy love of Art strongly awakened my interest. As I gazed on the heavenly faces he portrays, I felt that there was no exaggeration in the praise that I had seen bestowed upon him. His

works are indeed “radiant with glory of a transparent, golden, blessed world—with an unearthly expression of love and brightness and felicity. * * * His heads are like miniatures for delicacy; they have not much variety, for of passion he knew nothing, and even sorrow lost its sting by the consoling foresight of the blessedness to come. Into the anxieties of life, into the restless troubles of the world, into the longing of infinite unappeased desires, he had never even looked, far less ventured: he knew heaven, but not earth*.”

We left our guide at the door of the Biblioteca, where we were shown a few of the curious manuscripts which this celebrated library contains,—amongst others, the correspondence between Henry the Eighth and Anne Boleyn; and the presentation copy of the ‘Defence of the Faith,’ sent to Leo the Tenth, with Henry’s own signature to it†. We also saw some beautifully illuminated breviaries and Turkish manuscripts, and

* Gräfin Ida Hahn-Hahn.—(Mrs. Austin’s ‘Fragments from German Prose Writers,’ p. 212.)

† This work procured for Henry the title of “Fidei Defensor”—Defender of the Faith—given him by the Pope. It is a curious circumstance, that a title which a king of England obtained for writing a defence of Catholicism against the attacks of Luther, should now be borne by his Protestant successors.

then walked through the library, which consists of a fine hall, divided into two noble galleries by a row of six pillars running down the centre. The walls are painted in fresco, the subjects representing the Councils of the early Church, and the foundation of some of the most celebrated libraries in the world. Exquisite Etruscan vases, tables of *pietra-dura*, and pedestals of oriental alabaster supporting vases of Sèvres china, are ranged on either side. At the end of this hall, whichever way you look, a long vista of small rooms opens, connected by arches; the effect is beautiful. These rooms contain thousands of precious volumes; the compartments over the book-cases, painted in fresco, represent the deeds of Sixtus the Fifth, Pius the Seventh, and other Popes. In some of these small apartments are fine antique busts; mosaics and various curiosities lie scattered about, and one room is set apart for papyri.

Wearied as I was when we left the Vatican, I felt that we had not seen half the objects of interest which it contains; but indeed a whole life might be spent in this palace—a building whose name is associated with the history of Christendom, and which is the sacred depository of the greatest treasures of literature and art in the world.

I will conclude my letter with stating in plain numbers the extent of this mighty fabric, which seemed so incredible that I made our guide repeat it twice : it contains within its walls twelve thousand rooms, three hundred staircases, twenty-four court-yards, and twenty chapels !

LETTER XXI.

Rome, February 3rd.

ON leaving the Vatican, we observed many Cardinals' carriages standing in the Piazza of St. Peter's, and were just in time to see their Eminences descend from the Sistine Chapel, where they had been attending Vespers. Each one swept past us with his retinue of priests and servants; the latter bearing in large open baskets, lined with white satin and trimmed with silver, the robes of state and mitres of their respective masters. Amongst the Cardinals one attracted my attention by his youth and noble bearing—so striking a contrast to his aged and infirm companions, that I wondered how he could have attained so high a post in the Church at his early age. I found on inquiry that his history is a very romantic one. When quite a child he was carried off by a party of brigands to the mountains, and detained by them in the hope of a large ransom; his terror was so great, that he prayed fer-

vently to the Madonna and all the saints to save him, and made a solemn vow that if he escaped he would dedicate himself to the service of religion and take orders. He was at length released, and restored to his family, who were in consternation when they heard of his vow : for being the last scion of a noble Genoese house, the family, proud of a lineage handed down through many ages, with him will be extinct. They endeavoured to shake his determination, by the promise of a Papal dispensation ; but he was inflexible, and it only remained to raise him to the highest dignity in the Church.

As I look at this young cardinal, I cannot but fancy him as probably destined to be a future Pope. But the election to the Papal throne depends upon many conflicting interests, and even the most experienced diplomatists can rarely foretell the result at which the Conclave will arrive. The ceremonies preceding the election of the Pope are so curious and interesting that I will here briefly relate them to you.

The tolling of the great bell of the Capitol announces to the people of Rome that the Pope is dead. For nine days its sound is heard in every corner of the Catholic metropolis ; all business ceases, and the amusements and pleasures of the people are checked. Soon Cardinals from distant

countries begin to assemble in Rome, and the general Conclave is convened. This is held in one of the Papal palaces—that on the Quirinal, if it happens to be summer-time, or in the Vatican if it is winter. The Conclave of Cardinals, in whom is vested the power of electing the pontiff, are kept close prisoners during its sitting; each one occupies a separate cell, all intercourse with the world is strictly prohibited, and every means taken to prevent personal and political intrigues, which however have invariably accompanied these elections. The palace becomes a little world—a prison, guarded by the Mareschal of the Conclave, who is assisted in his function of jailer by the first Conservator of the Roman people; they keep the keys of the palace, and examine every one who enters. Physicians, apothecaries, barbers, &c. are permitted to take up their abode in the palace, to be in attendance on the Cardinals, and their Eminences are each allowed to have a servant, a private secretary, and a confessor; but once admitted, no egress is allowed until the election is determined. Every day at noon the dinners of the Cardinals are carried in procession from their Eminences' own palaces, enclosed in a box painted with the colours of the respective Cardinal, and borne in pomp on a platform by two servants in livery: two valets on foot open the march, and

the carriage of the Cardinal closes the procession. As they arrive, the dinners are received by the Conservator, and carefully examined, lest papers may be secreted (as has often been the case) in the pies or other viands. The populace assemble in crowds on the Piazza before the palace, watching the arrival of these singular convoys.

It is, as you may imagine, extremely difficult to reconcile the conflicting interests of the various parties engaged in the election of a Pope, and the Conclave has been known to sit for many months. The Cardinals suffer so much from close imprisonment in their hot and narrow cells, that, after wasting weeks or months in useless intrigue and idle delay, they have not unfrequently agreed to settle their differences by the sudden election of some person known to be unconnected with any of the factions which divided the Conclave; thus the tiara has often been placed on the head of one who was unconscious even of a desire to be raised to the Papal throne; and hence the adage, "*Qui entre Pape au Conclave, en sort Cardinal!*" Weariness and disgust of their prison life have thus produced in a day what diplomacy has failed to effect in a month; and it has been wittily though irreverently said, that "*Le Pape se fait alors que les Cardinaux commencent à être fous!*"

Twice every day the electors meet in a large

hall to ballot. Mass having been previously celebrated and the influence of the Holy Spirit invoked, the Cardinals in turn deposit a paper containing the name of their favourite candidate in an urn. These are proclaimed aloud by the Secretary of the Conclave, and the election is only concluded when two-thirds agree in their choice, until which time the scrutiny, as it is called, is repeated at eleven and five o'clock every day. But even when the Conclave have come to a decision, four European sovereigns (of France, Austria, Spain, and Portugal) have still the power of putting their veto on the election ; and as the interests of these nations have often been at variance, the obstacles in former times to the choice of a Pontiff usually appeared insurmountable.

Until a candidate is declared successful, the papers containing the votes are regularly burnt after each scrutiny, and crowds collect at the appointed hours, eagerly awaiting the result. This is communicated to them in a curious manner. The smoke from the burning papers is allowed to escape through a small iron tube, which is so placed as to be visible to the people without ; and while they continue daily to see this smoke, they know that their Pope is not yet elected, and depart discontented and grumbling. When the smoke no longer issues at the usual time, it is the

first announcement that the Conclave is broken up and the Pontiff chosen. Then the cannons at the Castle of St. Angelo are heard, and the news spreads like wild-fire through Rome. All the avenues leading to the palace are soon thronged with people, eager to learn on whom the choice has fallen. A Cardinal in his robes of state appears on a balcony, and in the following words proclaims that the Pope is elected: "*Annuncio vobis gaudium magnum—habemus Papam !**" and declares the name of the successful candidate. Immediately the bells throughout the city sound joyfully, the cannon are again fired, and thousands of voices shout aloud the name of the new Pontiff.

Having twice received the homage of his electors in the chapel of the palace, and been invested with the ring of office, the Pope proceeds to St. Peter's, to receive their homage a third time in public. The Piazza before the church, filled with spectators, then presents a magnificent spectacle. A vivid description of this scene is given in a work to which I am indebted for many of these particulars—'Rome Souterraine.' I will transcribe a passage or two.

"Eager to be the first to behold their new Pope, the Trasteverini, men and women, were

* "*I announce to you a great joy—we have a Pope !*"

piled above each other on the steps of the Basilica ; the respectful terror which their name inspires secured their undisputed possession of the place. The brilliant costume and massive ornaments of the women glittered in the sun, and the conical hats of the men were gaily crowned with flowers and ribbons. The Pope descends, and enters the Sacristy ; the people soon fill the immense aisles of the church, and the Pope re-appears, borne in his chair of state, preceded by his retinue of attending cardinals, bishops, nobles and guards ; and the choir chant the triumphal hymn, ‘ Ecce sacerdos magnus ! ’ A profound silence follows, and after praying a few moments at the Chapel of the Holy Sacrament, the Pope is carried to the tomb of St. Peter, where, seated on his throne, he again receives the homage of the cardinals and prelates, who kiss his hand, his foot and his cheeks, whilst the choir sing the *Te Deum* ; after which he bestows his benediction, and, mass being concluded, he returns to his palace. The next day the streets of Rome resume their former silent and deserted appearance.”

I may conclude this account with one or two anecdotes, which will illustrate what I have described. Ranke, in his ‘ History of the Popes,’ gives the following relation of the proceedings which followed the death of Leo the Tenth.

“The Conclave lasted long. ‘Sirs,’ said the Cardinal de’ Medici, who was alarmed at the return of the enemies of his house to Urbino and Perugia, and trembled for Florence itself, ‘Sirs, I see that from among us, here assembled, no Pope can be chosen. I have proposed to you three or four, but you have rejected them all: those, on the other hand, whom you propose, I cannot accept. We must seek a Pope among those who are not present.’ The Cardinals, assenting to his opinion, asked him whom he had in his mind. ‘Take,’ said he, ‘the Cardinal of Tortosa, an aged, venerable man, who is generally esteemed a saint.’ This was Adrian of Utrecht, formerly professor in the University of Lorraine, and teacher of Charles the Fifth, through whose personal attachment he had risen to the office of Governor of Spain, and to the dignity of Cardinal. Who would have thought that the Cardinals, hitherto invariably accustomed to consult their own personal interests in the election of a Pope, would agree to choose an absent man, a Netherlander, known to very few, and with whom none could hope to make terms for their private advantage? They suffered themselves to be hurried into this step by the surprize of so unlooked-for a proposition. After it was taken, they themselves did not rightly know how they had been led into it. They

were half dead with fear, says one of our authorities. It was affirmed that they had for a moment persuaded themselves that he would not accept the office. Pasquin represented the Pope as a schoolmaster, and the Cardinals as his scholars receiving chastisement at his hands*.”

Sixtus the Fifth was chosen from his supposed insignificance, having lived during his cardinalate a secluded life, tending his gardens and planting trees and vines. Ranke doubts the truth of the usually received story of his assuming the deportment of an old man previous to his election, and being selected as likely from his infirmities to live but a short time.

On the death of Pius the Sixth, in 1800, the Conclave assembled in the Church of San Giorgio at Venice. Two powerful rivals, the Cardinals Maffei and A***, divided the suffrages. Meeting one day in the garden of the convent attached to the church, they addressed each other, though such bitter enemies, with much politeness; when they saw appearing at the further end of the walk the good Cardinal Chiaramonti, who was repeating his breviary. Maffei suddenly exclaimed to his companion, “Neither you nor I shall ever be Pope; you will never triumph over me, nor I over you; let us make this good monk Pope:

* Ranke’s History of the Popes, vol. i. p. 90.

he is a favourite of Buonaparte, and will regain France for us.” “With all my heart,” replied A***; “but he is unacquainted with the management of affairs—he must take young Gonsalvi for his minister.” Cardinal Chiaramonti was consulted, who promised to take Monsignore Gonsalvi into his confidence, and the following day he was elected Pope*.

The present Pope, Gregory the Sixteenth, was so little conscious of the high dignity which awaited him, that the messenger appointed to inform him of the event found him asleep in his cell, in a convent on the Cœlian hill; and it was in a dreamy state between sleeping and waking that he was surprized by the intelligence, and sat up in his bed to affix his name to the proclamations, to the different courts of Europe, announcing the decision of the Conclave.

* Stendhal's *Promenades dans Rome*.

LETTER XXII.

Rome, February 3rd.

I DO not remember to have spoken to you of my favourite little ruin on the banks of the Tiber, which from its circular form is supposed to have been dedicated to the goddess Vesta. Although this is doubtful, yet, in admiring the beautiful portico, supported by Corinthian columns of Parian marble, which encircles it, I like to fancy it the temple sacred to that goddess, and to associate it with the history of the Vestal Virgins.

The institution of this worship dates as far back as the time of Numa, who consecrated a temple to Vesta, and appointed four priestesses to watch the sacred fire which perpetually burned on the altar, and to officiate in the services of the temple. Six more were afterwards appointed, but the number ten was never exceeded. They were chosen by the high-priests from noble Roman families, who esteemed it an honour to enrol a daughter's name amongst the Vestals. Dedicated at the early age of ten, they were bound to a service of thirty years, after which they were permitted to return

to the world, and even to marry. They were held in great reverence by the Roman people, places of honour near the patricians and senators were appointed for them in the amphitheatres, and the signal for the commencement of the games was given by a Vestal Virgin. When they passed along the streets, in their chariots of ivory and gold, Lictors preceded them, crying aloud, "Make way for the Vestals!" Every one stopped, and all heads were bowed in silence; it was profanation to look on them. If convicted of a breach of her vow of chastity, or of having allowed the sacred fire to expire on the altar, the Vestal was condemned to be buried alive. On those occasions, as the melancholy train passed from the temple to the field (still called the Campo Scelerato) beyond the walls, where the sepulchre was prepared, not a creature was seen in the streets; every house was closed, as in a time of general mourning. The Flamens preceded the unhappy victim, who, stripped of her rich ornaments and wrapped in grave-clothes, was consigned after many rites and prayers to her living tomb—a vault of small dimensions, in which was placed a couch, and on a table a small provision of bread and water, a lamp, and some oil. The entrance was then built up, and the Vestal left to her lonely and dreadful death.

The form of the temples of Vesta was circular—emblematic of the earth; and, devoid of any ornament, they retained, amidst the pomp and luxury of other public edifices, the severe simplicity of the early ages. There were no statues, no gold and silver or precious stones; a plain altar rose in the centre of the building, on which burned the sacred fire. The safety of the city was held to be connected with the conservation of this fire, which, whenever extinguished, was only rekindled by the rays of the sun*.

February 5th.

THE words “Studio di Canova,” inscribed over a little door in a by-street through which we were passing the other day, arrested our attention; and on knocking, we were admitted into the work-room of Canova, the greatest sculptor of his age. It is now occupied by one of his pupils, who seemed much pleased at the interest we expressed in visiting a spot so consecrated to genius: he pointed out to us several figures moulded in clay by his great master’s hand, and, what was still more interesting, the statue on which he was at work when death terminated his labours; it was

* See Keightley’s *Mythology*, p. 514. The worship of Vesta is believed to have belonged to the religion of the ancient population of Latium.

roughly sketched in the block of marble, and had scarcely assumed any form.

Sculpture, after the time of Michael Angelo, did not maintain the place amongst the fine arts to which he had raised it; his successors imitated the faults, while they could never attain to the excellences, of that great man; and what was in him grandeur and sublimity, became in their feeble hands mere exaggeration and absurdity. In all the works of this period is seen a deficiency in creative power, and a want of knowledge of the true principles of art. Beauty was thought to consist in strange attitudes, violent contortions of the human frame, colossal forms, and heavy draperies, whilst simplicity and truth were entirely lost sight of. I shall say little of Lorenzo Bernini, who, unlike most men of genius, was a favourite of fortune—patronized by the great, admired, flattered, and unhappily imitated. His works exhibit a sad deficiency of good taste. I have somewhere seen it said, and justly, of Bernini, “*Le sue qualità sono vizi brillanti*,” (his qualities are brilliant vices); grace in his hands becomes grimace—and simplicity, affectation. Yet Bernini was a man of no ordinary talent, and, had he possessed wisdom enough to take nature and the ancients as his models, instead of pur-

suing novelty and originality through all the vagaries of his own unformed taste, he might have gained a high reputation; we can now only say, with one of his biographers, “*Ma, come mai un tanto ingegno si smarrì?*” (How could such a genius err so greatly?)

Bernini died in 1680, and sculpture after his time degenerated more and more: he had corrupted the public taste, and the consequences were long felt. The art had reached its lowest ebb, when, in 1771, there arose in the Venetian territory a man destined to restore it, and breathe new spirit and beauty into its lifeless form. This was Antonio Canova. Born in humble life, he was employed in working stone quarries near Possagno, his native village. The attention of Faliero, a senator of Venice, was attracted to this boy by a beautiful lamb which he had moulded in butter for the table of that nobleman, and he placed young Canova with a sculptor, under whose instruction he made some progress. It was not however until he visited Rome that he felt what art was, and recognized within himself the power, which he afterwards discovered to the world, to regenerate it. To overthrow erroneous and long-established opinions and to combat weak prejudices, was his difficult task, and he accomplished it faithfully. He

formed his taste from an attentive study of the antique, and we see the effects in his works, which are stamped with a pure and classic beauty. These are scattered throughout Europe: England possesses some exquisite specimens, and the universal admiration they inspire is a sufficient test of their excellence.

When the congress of sovereigns met in Paris in 1815, to settle their respective claims to the territories delivered into their hands upon the subjugation of Buonaparte, Canova appeared amongst them, and in the name of his beloved Italy boldly reclaimed the statues and pictures of which she had been deprived by the French. He spoke with the enthusiasm of a son, as his biographer Sacchi says, who implored the restitution of property stolen from his mother. His prayer was heard, the restoration of those treasures of art was granted to his petition, and Italy hailed Canova on his return with acclamations of joy. This great man, the pride of modern Italy, died at Venice in 1822, and was buried in the church of his native village Possagno; his epitaph, I believe, consists simply of these two words—“*Qui Canova!*”

The venerable Thorwaldsen, the contemporary of Canova, is still alive, and has just completed several groups of statues for a church in Copenhagen, the metropolis of his native land; for he

is a Dane by birth, although educated in Rome. We have visited his studio several times, and I contemplate his works with increasing admiration. In his conceptions there is a pure classic taste, united with such vigour of execution as must raise him high in the estimation of all lovers of art. The statues to which I have alluded are perhaps amongst his best works. In one group, of Christ and the twelve Apostles, larger than life, the figure of our Saviour is grandly conceived; John the Baptist, surrounded by a group of auditors, forms another group, which is intended for the baptistery of the church; the expression of the figures is varied and finely contrasted: the infantine grace of childhood, the eagerness of inquiring youth, the sober attention of old-age, the Jew, the mother, and the faithful disciple, are all given with truth and power. Thorwaldsen's bassi-rilievi are beautiful: we saw the models of those representing the deeds of Alexander's life, which Buonaparte had ordered for the palace of the Quirinal, when he was preparing it for the residence of his son "the King of Rome."

We may well be proud of our countryman Gibson, the productions of whose chisel bear the test of examination even here, amidst the treasures of ancient and modern sculpture. We have seen him at work on a beautiful Cupid with a but-

terfly*; his Hylas, and Proserpine gathering flowers on the plains of Enna, are charming statues. Mr. Gibson is full of a deep feeling and love for his art: he pursues it with a thorough knowledge of its capabilities, and we may safely prophesy for him increasing excellence†.

As specimens of an art brought to great perfection in Rome, I must not omit to mention Cameos.

The designs for these ornaments are generally chosen from antique gems or statues, sometimes from celebrated pictures, and frequently from the works of modern sculptors. The well-known figures of Day and Night are from bassi-rilievi by Thorwaldsen. The most elaborate and perhaps the most beautiful cameo I have seen is taken from Guido's Aurora, which is of great size; but, although it contains so many figures, each one is beautifully distinct. The material used in making cameos is the helmet-shell, which has many coats of different thickness and colour. By skilfully removing these, the figures are left in fine relief

* This statue has since been exhibited in England.

† To Mr. Roscoe, I believe, belongs the honour of having given the first impulse and encouragement to the talents of Gibson. Well and worthily is the name of the historian of Italy's brightest times associated with the advancement of art; and we may conceive the high gratification he would have derived, had he lived to witness the honour which Mr. Gibson has reflected on his native country.

of white, on a gray or sometimes red ground. I have been much interested in watching Saulini, one of the best artists in his profession, engaged at his work, as he gently cut away the superfluous shell and revealed the figure. The instruments he employs are very minute and sharp, and the workmanship is so delicate that it requires a steady and skilful hand.

There is no city in the world perhaps which offers such beautiful panoramic views as Rome: they seem endless in their variety, and, although they undoubtedly owe much of their power over the mind to association, are in themselves exquisite. Nothing, I think, strikes a stranger more than the first view of an Italian city, seen from a distance; the absence of smoke, the clear sky of deep azure, spreading far and wide above his head, the thin, pure atmosphere, surrounding all objects with something of a magic tint, impart an indescribable charm to the scene. We read of the glowing beauty of Italian skies, but only in Italy can its reality be felt; those who have tasted the delight of moments such as we enjoyed last evening, can alone fully understand all its influence on the heart and mind.

We had wandered from the carriage, and ascended the steep and rugged road which leads to the top of the Janiculum, intending to visit Sant'

Onofrio, the church where Tasso is buried. The sun was sinking gradually, and the landscape beneath was bathed in the mellow light of evening, when the shadows lengthen, and every object takes a peculiar hue, and colours, though brighter even than at noon-day, blend in soft, rich harmony :

“ Various and bright and full the earth’s green tint
In this contrasted light, as if it throve
On the last sunbeams, deepening as it fed
Into unusual richness.”

How glorious was the view ! Long did I stand gazing silently on that scene of matchless beauty, as my eye wandered from modern to ancient Rome. The palaces, churches, and gardens of the former were immediately before us : the wondrous dome of St. Peter’s lay, as it were, at our feet : the silent convents, those living graves—the palaces, more stately but scarcely less melancholy in appearance—the obelisks, monuments of ages so remote, that, beside the thoughts they awaken, Rome itself seems but a city of yesterday—the palm-trees, a few of which are scattered among the buildings, speaking to us of the East,—these were the objects presented to us. Then, turning to the right, it was as if the history of an empire were suddenly unfolded to us, and the fate of man’s ambition stood written in characters too plain to be mistaken ; ruins marked the

place where Rome had stood, and beyond was a solitude as of the desert. Yet was the scene all beautiful; for Nature, triumphing over destruction and decay, had invested the scene with her own grace and loveliness, and the tall cypress and pine, the orange groves, and the festoons of vines mingled with the desolation.

I must here conclude my letter—the last I shall write to you from Rome: tomorrow morning we set out for Naples. Italy, with all its varied objects of interest, has afforded me pleasures which can never pass away. “*Les souvenirs de l’esprit,*” justly observes Madame de Staël, “*sont acquis par l’étude—les souvenirs de l’imagination naissent d’une impression plus immédiate et plus intime, qui donne de la vie à la pensée, et nous rend, pour ainsi dire, témoins de ce que nous avons appris: la lecture de l’histoire, les réflexions qu’elle excite, agissent moins sur notre âme que ces pierres en desordre.*” Amidst scenes so associated with the history of mankind and the progress of civilization, the imagination is kept constantly alive, and the mind naturally and imperceptibly gains a habit of reflection. History, instead of being a bare record of events in which we have no part, acquires a truth and reality, and exercises its proper influence on the heart and mind; whilst Art, here presented under its noblest forms, creates

within us a new sense of the perception of truth and beauty, opening inexhaustible sources of pure and refining enjoyment.

If, as I have desired, I have been able to make you in any degree a sharer in the pleasures which my journey through Italy has afforded me, you will readily enter into the feelings of regret with which I anticipate our departure tomorrow. "Rome is a city dear to all who can think and feel. The remembrance of riches or power cannot create this affection; not Venice with her floating palaces, nor Florence with her Eastern wealth, leave behind that pleasing melancholy which strangers feel in visiting the desolate fields and lonely walls of Rome. Who can remember it in after years without mournful yet delightful recollections? who that has drunk of her fountains, and passed her massive gates, can ever forget ROME?*"

* Bell's Observations on Italy.

TABLE OF HISTORICAL AND LITERARY CHARACTERS IN THE FOURTEENTH,
FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH CENTURIES.

GERMANY.	POPES.	FRANCE.	ENGLAND.	LITERARY MEN.	ITALIAN PAINTERS.
Louis of Bavaria.	Clement V. (Papal court re- moved to Avi- gnon.)	Philip IV. Charles V.	Edward I. Edward II.	Dante. Petrarca.	Cimabue.
Charles IV.	Gregory XI. (returns to Rome.)	Charles VI.	Edward III.	Boccaccio. Froissart.	Giotto.
	Nicholas V.		Richard II. Henry IV.	Wickliffe.	Orcagna. Benozzo Gozzoli. Simone da Memmi.
	Pius II. (Eneas Sylvius.)	Charles VII. (Jean d'Arc.)	Henry V. Henry VI.	Chaucer.	Masaccio.
Frederic III.	Alexander VI. (Borgia.)	Louis XI.	Edward IV. Edward V.	Lorenzo de' Medici. Poliziano. Sannazzaro.	Leonardo da Vinci. Michael Angelo. Andrea del Sarto.
Maximilian I.		Charles VIII.	Richard III.	Bembo. Marsilio Ficino.	Pietro Perugino. Rafael Sanzio. Giulio Romano. Correggio. Titian.
	Julius II. Leo X. (Medici.)	Francis I.	Henry VII.	Martin Luther.	Barocci.
Charles V.	Adrian VI.	Henry II. (Catherine de' Medici.)	Henry VIII.	Melancthon.	Poussin.
Ferdinand I.	Clement VII. (Medici.)		Edward VI.	Zwinglius.	Holbein.
	Paul III. (Farnese.)	Francis II.	Mary.	Ignatius Loyola.	Paul Veronese.
Maximilian II.	Gregory XIII.	Charles IX.		Macchiavelli.	Tintoretto.
Rudolph II.	Sixtus V.	Henry III. Henry IV.	Elizabeth.	Ariosto. Tasso. Shakspeare. Spenser.	Palma Vecchio. The Caracci. Guido Reni. Albano. Domenichino. Guercino.

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